

PS3
PlayStation 3PS3
PlayStation Portable

PlayStation 2

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Network

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - Australia

ISSUE 53 MARCH 2011
100% Australian Content

FIRST REVIEW! KILL ZONE

It's here! Sony fires the first salvo for shooter-of-the-year!

EXCLUSIVE VERDICT! ▶

DEAD SPACE 2

Reviewed! Move over Resident Evil, horror has a new hero!

LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

Why it's every game you've ever played!
The official verdict!

TRUE CRIME: HONG KONG

Going bonkers in Honkers

TOMB RAIDER

Everything you need to know about Lara's revival

Your 100 Favourite Games Ever!

(AS VOTED BY YOU!)

EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK! ▶

SSX: DEADLY DESCENTS

A PS2 classic reborn bigger than you could ever imagine!



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PRINT POST APPROVED
PP255003/06871

NOW WITH MIKE HAGGAR! MARVEL VS CAPCOM 3: NEW SCREENS!

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GAMES AND COUNTING



Rio Carnival Dance-Off 
created by Wexfordian




Penguin Turf War 
created by rtm224



BREAKING NEWS

LITTLEBIGPLANET 2 LETS PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD PLAY, CREATE AND SHARE ANYTHING THEY CAN IMAGINE. FROM RACERS TO PUZZLERS, PLATFORMERS TO SHOOTERS - MORE POSSIBILITIES THAN EVER BEFORE! LITTLEBIGPLANET 2 LETS PEOPLE A



Caution: Gaming experience may change online

LITTLEBIGPLANET.COM THE GAME IS JUST THE START. LIT

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COVER STORY

Killzone 3

Sieg space hell 64

Those damn, dirty Higs return in this explosive continuation of the PS3's greatest shooter series. Your objective: not to die for your planet, but to make those glowy-eyed bastards die for theirs.

“The Move aiming system is actually the **closest experience we've ever had to the replication of mouse-like accuracy**”

THE 100 GREATEST PLAYSTATION GAMES EVER AS VOTED BY YOU!

Responses to our special countdown in issue #50 came thick and fast. The results are in, amigos. Here are Australia's most-loved PlayStation games. Did your all-time fave make the cut? Read on!

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In issue #50 we told you what we thought the Top 50 games on a Sony ought to be. This month we've handed the mag over to you and asked for a rebuttal.



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Who left the fridge open? The SSX series thaws and returns to us after a long, frozen hiatus. EA explain why the stance of this reboot is regular, not goofy.

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This crossover fighter has a new exciting brawler in its roster!

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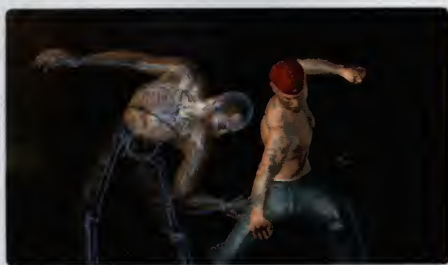
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Gamers are no stranger to dismemberment. But using self limb-pruning as a viable combat option: not so much. We hand our ears to Konami for a better explanation.



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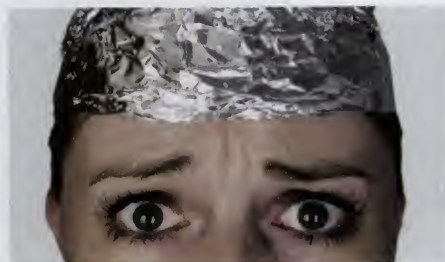
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We mull over which necessary parts of life get postponed for the sake of "a few minutes more".



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Angry Sackboy has had a gutful of wild claims from gamers in tin-foil hats.



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GT5 Photo Mode

Learn techniques to have your car pout and make love to the camera.

► INSIDER

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All the essential news nuggets delivered as one tasty column

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A great debate will rage here every month

Insane

We have some fun at somebody else's expense

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A month and a bit of essential activities and releases

Release Schedule

An up-to-date list of all upcoming and recently-released PS3 titles

Opinion: Paul Taylor

Paul explains why cutscenes need to be given the chop

Opinion: Adam Mathew

Adam dubs on an old friend to entertain and forewarn us all

Opinion: Angry Sackboy

The bad-ass burlap bag sets his gaze upon conspiracy theorists

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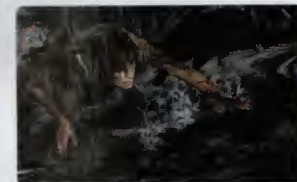
SSX: Deadly Descents

The PS2 snowboarding game returns, but not in the way you'd imagine. Prepare yourself for darker arcade action where the mountain is the boss fight.

Reader Top 100

What's in your Sony century? That's the question we asked you, our readers, and here are the results. Do you agree?

► PREVIEWS



Tomb Raider



True Crime: Hong Kong



X-Men: Destiny

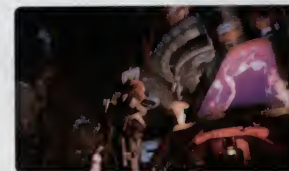
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SSX: Deadly Descents

► REVIEWS



Killzone 3



Mass Effect 2



LittleBigPlanet 2



Dead Space 2

Apache: Air Assault

Mindjack

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Meet the team



Paul Taylor
Deputy Editor

Got back from my holidays late, so all the hard work's been done for me. Aren't I the lucky one?

Playing: *Apache: AA*
Wanting: *Deus Ex: HR*



Stephanie Goh
Art Director

TRON: Legacy at the IMAX blew my mind. What are my chances of getting a light cycle for my birthday?

Playing: *LittleBigPlanet 2*
Wanting: *Uncharted 3*



Adam Mathew
Associate Editor

I've been playing *Dead Space 2*. You could build a second house from the bricks I've been crapping.

Playing: *Dead Space 2*
Wanting: *D.N.F.*



James Cottee
Contributor

I've been watching the *Episode III* review, over and over again. 'Shot, reverse shot. Shot, reverse shot...'

Playing: *MHFU*
Wanting: *Portal 2*



James Ellis
Contributor

Working off the summer Christmas binge with the *Tower 200*. Got a door. You got a gym? Randy says so.

Playing: *SSIV*
Wanting: *MvC3*



Nathan Lawrence
Contributor

Revisiting the cramped and creepy corridors of the USG Ishimura in *Dead Space* and wearing brown undies.

Playing: *Killzone 3*
Wanting: *Uncharted 3*



Dave Kozicki
Contributor

After my father's mysterious death I've been meting out justice with my trusty sidekicking sidekick, Kato.

Playing: *BFBC2: Vietnam*
Wanting: *Uncharted 3*



Toby McCasker
Contributor

Move over *Black Ops*, I've just discovered *Bad Company 2*! I'm hands down the worse Engineer ever.

Playing: *Bad Company 2*
Wanting: *Deus Ex: HR*

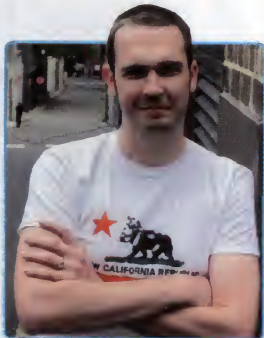


Angry Sackboy
Contributor

El baggo has been spending his time loving *LittleBigPlanet 2*. Bet you didn't see that coming.

Playing: *LBP2*
Wanting: *LBP3*

Editorial



Counting the votes for your 100 favourite PlayStation games, of all time was a fascinating exercise.

We watched as the usual suspects rose to the top of the ladder. We looked on as some old personal favourites of our own cemented their places in the list, clearly favourites of yours too. Likewise, as the final figures came together, we saw games we adored failing to secure votes and dropping away. *Wipeout 2097* has the dubious distinction of coming in at

number 101. This nearly gave Paul an aneurism.

There aren't many surprises in the Top 10, but I will say the domination of one particular franchise is noteworthy. Flick over to the feature now on page 42 if you'd rather I not spoil it for you.

I'm well aware the *Grand Theft Auto* series is a juggernaut, but four *GTA* games within Australia's Top 10 favourite PlayStation games of all time is an incredible achievement.

Just what is it about the *GTA* series that makes them so remarkable and memorable, even years down the track? Many have tried to emulate the formula, but none have succeeded.

I can't begin to even estimate how many games I've begun over the past 15 years of PlayStation, but for some reason I can remember the first time I saw each and every *GTA* game in action for the first time.

In 1997 I was 15 years old. Unfortunately the teller at Big W wasn't buying it so I had to get my dad to buy the original *Grand Theft Auto* on my behalf. He didn't seem too keen at the time but I've since furnished him with some grandchildren, so we're square now.

In 1999 I was staying with a few mates. Two of them went out to get food. They returned two hours later with no food and a copy of *GTA2*. We played it all night and just ate Burger Men and Cheezels for dinner.

In 2001 I took a day off uni to pick up my pre-ordered *GTAIII*. I played it all afternoon. That night, instead of sleeping, I played it some more.

In 2002 I called in sick to work because my copy of *GTA: Vice City* had just arrived in the mail. It came from New Zealand and was the first thing I'd ever bought off the internet.

The first time I saw *GTA: San Andreas* was at the old *OPS* office. The first time I saw *GTAIV* was at Rockstar New York. I can remember my first experiences with these games vividly. I can't explain how Rockstar North makes such unforgettable games, it just does.

Witchcraft, maybe.

Luke Reilly
Editor

Playing: *Gran Turismo 5*
Wanting: *L.A. Noire*

SPEAK WITH US!

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on *OPS*, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:



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Citrus Media, PO Box 20154, World
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Question: what is the gift that keeps on giving the whole year round? Love? Wrong. A scratch-and-sniff calendar of celebrity crotches? No. Please stop abusing our rhetorical system.

The answer we were looking for is an *OPS* subscription! Think about it, every issue – cheaper – delivered to your door via magic.

TURN TO PAGE 32

Editorial & Design

Editor

Luke Reilly

Deputy Editor

Paul Taylor

Associate Editor

Adam Mathew

Contributors

James Ellis, James Cottee,

Anthony O'Connor, David

Kozicki, Toby McCasker,

Jared Mallia, Andy Astruc,

Nathan Lawrence

Art Director

Stephanie Goh

Creative Director

Paul Cook

Publishing

& Circulation

Circulation Enquiries

(02) 9186 9114

Advertising & Marketing

National Business Manager

Nikki Turnbull

(02) 9186 9104

How to contact us

Tel (02) 9186 9186

Fax (02) 9186 9187

Email ops@citrusmedia.com.au

Official PlayStation Magazine

PO Box 20154

World Square

NSW 2002

Want to subscribe?

Call 136 116

(NZ residents

+61 2 9282 8000)

Fax (02) 9267 4363

www.magshop.com.au

Management

Director

Jim Flynn

Financial Controller

Stuart Harle

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surprise, Nassfeld!



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insider

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SHOUT LET IT ALL OUT

Why *Skyrim* is a game **we can't do without**

Excuse us, fantasy RPG fans, while we kiss the sky. For those of you who aren't familiar with *Skyrim* and the superb pedigree it represents, here's a quick recap.

Skyrim is the next instalment in the award-winning *Elder Scrolls* series and the follow up to the 2006 Game of the Year, *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*. Both games come from the +10 talented minds at Bethesda Game Studios, creators of the 2008 Game of the Year, *Fallout 3*. That's right folks, *Skyrim* bears the sort of DNA that represents a purebred RPG experience.

The huge villain in this instalment of *Elder Scrolls* is the great dragon Alduin. This Beast is the main antagonist, and will most likely be the end game as well. Our keen elf eyes also spied some other new enemies, such as mountain giants, frost trolls, ice wraiths, and were-yetis.

It looks as though the undead get a

bit of a clean-up too; they're no longer mere skeletons, but undead warriors with some of their flesh still clinging to their bodies. For what it's worth, we still think they're gutless.

Skyrim is the northernmost region in all of Tamriel and its geology consists of mountainous and snowy regions. In comparative terms, *Oblivion* fans with encyclopedic knowledge can expect the sort of architecture and atmosphere seen in the town of Bruma. *Skyrim* is the least populated of all regions in Tamriel, and there will be less lush forests and grassy areas as seen in *Cyrodill*.

The fine art of conversation will be changed in *Skyrim*. You will no longer zoom in on the NPC's face, but actually talk to them more naturally. So NPCs may turn back to their work (chopping wood, serving alcohol) whilst talking to you. Sounds like next-gen rudeness to us and we will be stabbing any and all perpetrators.

The combat is being revved up as well, as you will now be able to dual-wield weapons and spells. Making like medieval John Woo you can rock up to a fight with a dagger and a longsword, or two of the same spell in each hand will amplify its potency.

But the fun is just beginning. It's unconfirmed as to whether your protagonist is one of the 'last of the Dragonborn', but it is known that you can bust out Dragon Shouts. Though it sounds like a drinking game for D&D nerds, a Dragon Shout actually lets you fling your enemies against a wall, or even call in your very own dragon.

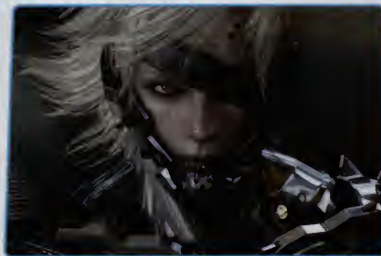
Dragonborn or not, you'll still be able to choose from one of 10 races, but Bethesda is aiming for a classless system where you improve organically, however you wish.

Whichever way you look at it *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* is worth shouting about. Stay tuned for more info.



In Short

A brief look at this month's news



- ▶ **Kojima Productions** is recruiting more *Metal Gear* staff.
- ▶ EA's has confirmed a March release for **SHIFT 2: Unleashed**
- ▶ Rumours are abounding that Sony is going to reveal the **PSP2** during a "business overview and strategy meeting" in Tokyo as you're reading this.
- ▶ Square Enix announced **Final Fantasy XIII-2** just as we were going to print. Due out roughly this time next year (summer 2012), the game will be a direct sequel to *Final Fantasy XIII*, featuring a brand new story that stems from *XIII*, as well as an evolved battle system.
- ▶ **Ed Boon** has asked his Twitter followers, "Tell me your order of preference for a DLC character. Rain, Shinnok, Kenshi, Robo-smoke, or new character?" In a later Twitter post he also added *Mortal Kombat 4*'s Tanya to the list of potential combatants.
- ▶ *Shattered Dimensions* developer, **Beenox**, will be in charge of all future *Spider-Man* games.
- ▶ A new **Bond** game has been greenlit following news 007 is returning to cinemas in 2012.
- ▶ **Sony** is finally ready to take on one of the largest emerging markets in the world: China. In addition to localisation Sony plans on developing games in the region. Guangdong Animation City (GAC), an investor in PlayStation's Chinese expansion, noted that the industry could expand its worth to over 100 billion yuan (about US\$15 billion) annually within the next five years.
- ▶ **Fight Night Champion** will feature regional anaerobic fatigue. Four different quadrants of the body will have their own localised stamina, penalising players for overusing one single muscle group.
- ▶ EA's set to reveal DICE's **Battlefield 3** on March 1.
- ▶ Mathieu Weschler wins the *OPS Award* for *Shit We're Supremely Jealous Of and Wish We Made Ourselves*. Weschler has spent the last two years creating what's thought to be the first feature-length machinima film. **The Trashmaster** is a 90-minute movie created entirely in *GTAIV* about a vigilante garbo hell bent on dealing with human trash. Check it out: tinyurl.com/GTAIV-trashmaster
- ▶ It's rumoured that Activision's **Sledgehammer Games** will make the "next" *Call of Duty* title. It's also rumoured that Raven is also working on something within the *Call of Duty* universe and that Infinity Ward is developing a prequel based on Ghost from *Modern Warfare 2*.
- ▶ Valve has confirmed that **Portal 2** will feature cross-platform play between PS3, PC and Mac.
- ▶ **Move** support has been confirmed for *Top Spin 4*.
- ▶ *Medal of Honor* developer **Danger Close** is working on an "unannounced AAA first person shooter title," according to a job listing the LA studio has posted. We're betting it's another *Medal of Honor* and Dusty's beard will be twice as long.
- ▶ Telltale's upcoming episodic **Jurassic Park** series has been inspired by *Heavy Rain*.
- ▶ The next title in the *Silent Hill* series, **Silent Hill: Downpour**, has been exposed.



He's pretty useless in an arse-kicking contest

► INTERVIEW

Out on a Limb

OPS speaks to NeverDead producer and lead game designer **Shinta Nojiri**

OPS: Where did the idea of a character who can function despite being blown apart come from? Did it come from the guys at your developer Rebellion or was that your idea? It's pretty out there...

SN: The idea of a character who can operate despite being blown apart was my idea.

When my boss told me to make a game with an external developer I thought of making a game that had a theme of immortality.

However, this is a very common theme so to make this game unique I thought I would have the main character be immortal but other than that, he is no different from a normal person. As a result, he has no superpowers or superhuman strength so when he is attacked by enemies his body parts get dismembered from his body.

OPS: Why the decision to base yourself in the UK? Is it part of the European R and D push that resulted in the new *Castlevania*?

SN: I am not only the Producer for the game but also the lead game designer.

If I reside with the team in the UK, it is possible to make quick progress because I am able to make critical decisions on the spot with the team developing the game.

If I worked with Rebellion from Japan, even the smallest decision will take time to confirm with myself which is why I decided to locate myself in the UK.

OPS: The big question is, then, if you cannot die in *NeverDead*, how can the player actually lose? Where's the risk?

SN: I can't tell you all the secrets but I'll give you an example of a game over for the game.

In certain missions, you will be working with your partner Arcadia. When playing the solo campaign, she is an AI character.

Arcadia is not an immortal like Bryce so the player would have to protect Arcadia during that mission.

If she takes too much damage and she dies, it's a game over for the player.

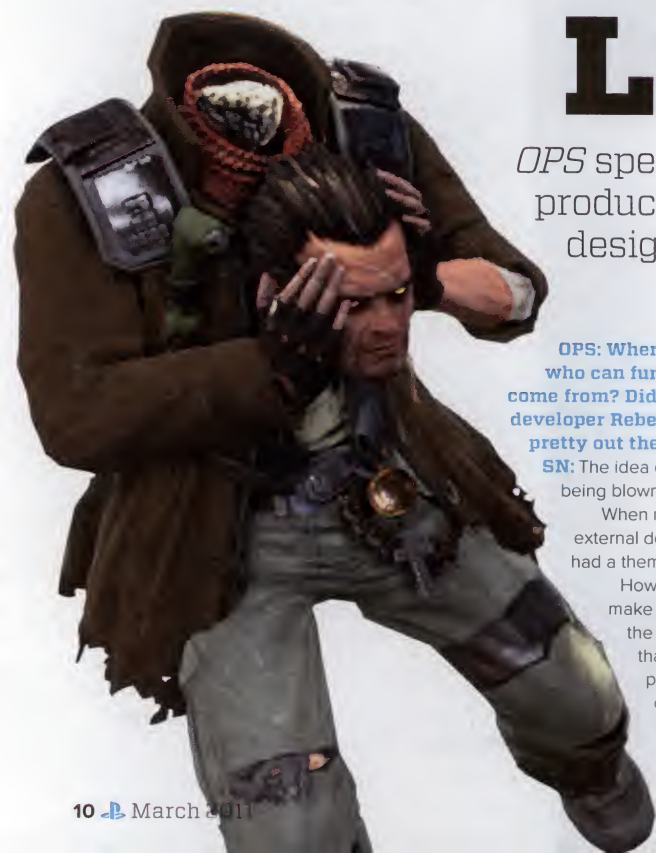
When Bryce is alone? That's still a secret.

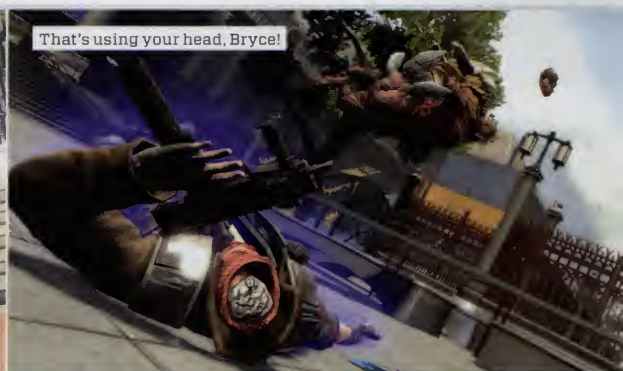
OPS: How does the dismemberment thing work? Does he fall apart in a set order or is it context-sensitive? Can limbs be sent off to kill things independently, for instance?

SN: When Bryce is attacked by enemies or is hit by a strong force – like falling from the top of a building – his limbs can get dismembered from his body.

This dismemberment feature does not occur in a set order, instead it depends which part of the body that Bryce is hit.

Because Bryce is immortal, he can also





detach his limbs on his own, although it's painful.

For example, when he detaches his arm he can throw it in the midst of enemies. The detached arm can shoot when the player pulls the trigger.

The arm will not be able to aim but it will shoot at random so it will be possible to kill off those enemies from a distance.

In another case, Bryce can use his body parts as bait to distract the enemy and attack them while they are not paying attention.

Another essential feature that utilises Bryce's immortality is his skill to survive in any situation. The environment is created so that the majority can be destroyed. Bryce can use this to defeat the enemies. In cases where he is surrounded by the demonic horde in a building, it is possible to shoot the ceiling so that it collapses on the enemy and himself. Bryce will be crushed along with the enemy but he can collect his lost limbs

“When Bryce is attacked or is hit by a strong force his limbs can get dismembered from his body”

and continue fighting the next wave of enemies.

It will be the core gameplay of *NeverDead* to manage the gathering of dismembered limbs, evading flying chunks, and attacks at the same time. The player needs to control involving enemies and even himself into critical situations to defeat them.

OPS: Is Arcadia a playable character or a narrative source that appears between stages?

SN: She is in the gameplay as an AI character when playing alone.

Bryce needs to protect her by taking damage instead of her.

During multiplayer, it is possible to control Arcadia as well although the gameplay will be drastically different since she is not an immortal.

OPS: Can you flesh out the background of the story a little? Why are the demons invading?

SN: Bryce, the main character of *NeverDead* fought against the Demon King and its massive force with his wife. At the final stand-off, Bryce lost the battle against this evil antagonist where he lost his only love in the battle. Defeated and losing all hope, Bryce was made immortal losing

any method of gaining victory against the Demon King. Now, Bryce makes small change as he hunts weak demons for the NADA (National Anti-Demon Agency) with his partner Arcadia. Nothing matters to him since he is immortal and he has no goal in life.

OPS: How is *NeverDead* structured in terms of maps? Is it a linear path, or is there an open play area to explore?

SN: The maps of *NeverDead* are linear but it also has certain areas where the player can explore.

OPS: How does the game evolve as it is played? Is Bryce as powerful as he'll ever be from the get-go, or does he begin with a limited number of abilities and develop more as it progresses? If so, what does he need to expand his range?

SN: As the game evolves, there will be a number of different strategies the player can use.

This comes mostly from our ability system that will be implemented.

By building up experience points from defeating the enemy, the player will be able to purchase abilities that will expand Bryce's immortality.

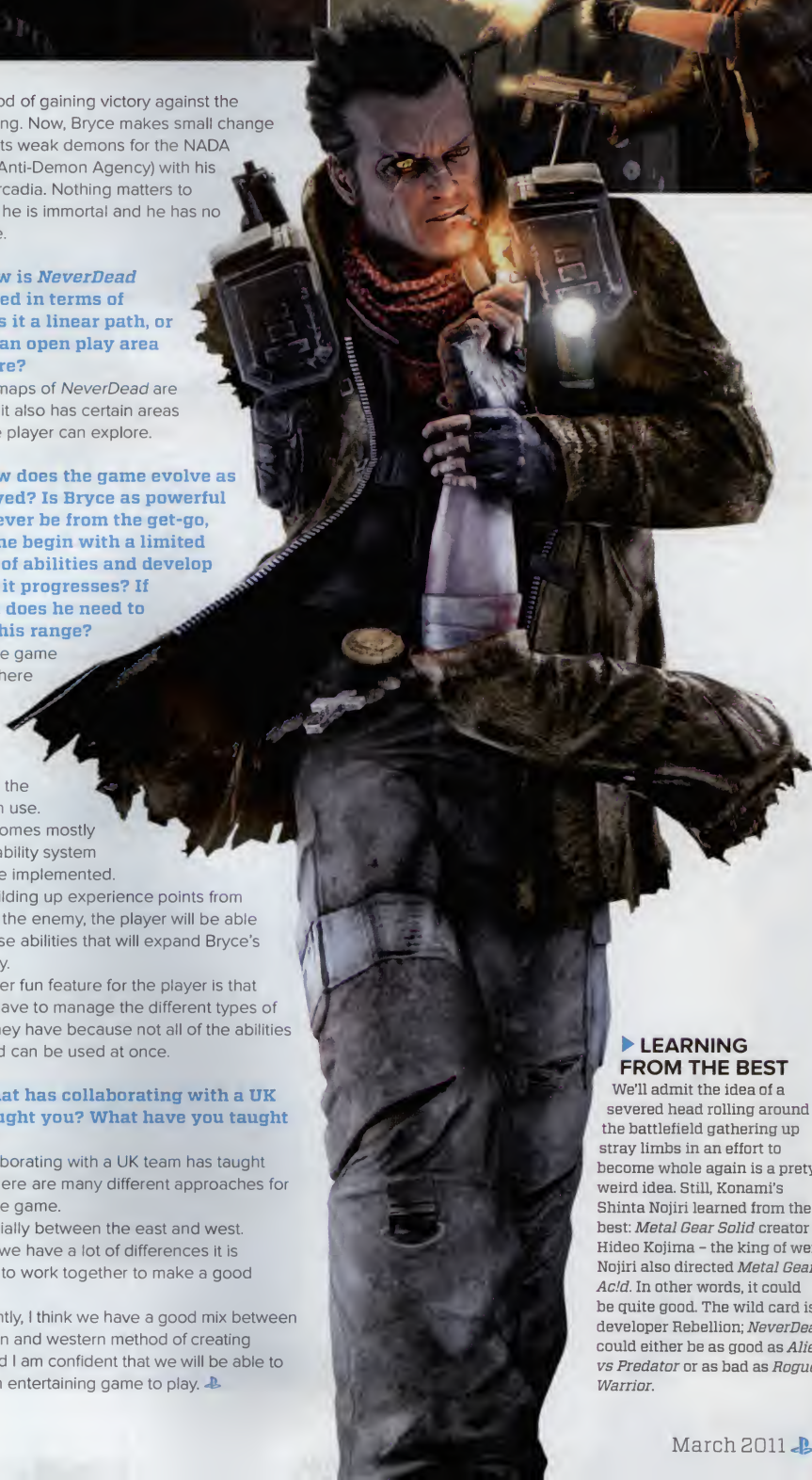
Another fun feature for the player is that they will have to manage the different types of abilities they have because not all of the abilities purchased can be used at once.

OPS: What has collaborating with a UK team taught you? What have you taught them?

SN: Collaborating with a UK team has taught me that there are many different approaches for making the game.

Especially between the east and west. Although we have a lot of differences it is important to work together to make a good game.

Currently, I think we have a good mix between the eastern and western method of creating games and I am confident that we will be able to release an entertaining game to play. ♪



► LEARNING FROM THE BEST

We'll admit the idea of a severed head rolling around the battlefield gathering up stray limbs in an effort to become whole again is a pretty weird idea. Still, Konami's Shinta Nojiri learned from the best: *Metal Gear Solid* creator Hideo Kojima – the king of weird. Nojiri also directed *Metal Gear Acid*. In other words, it could be quite good. The wild card is developer Rebellion; *NeverDead* could either be as good as *Aliens* vs *Predator* or as bad as *Rogue Warrior*.

IN REALITY

Space travel: It's not just a quick trip to the shops

As seen in: *Mass Effect 2*, *Killzone 3*, *Dead Space 2*, everything else set in space

Space travel, as it is depicted in popular fiction, is physically impossible.

It's a fallacy repeated time and again in movies, comics, games, and novels. Major Buck Strongrod, at the bridge of his edgy-looking space sloop, simply flicks a switch to make the lights of the firmament warp into linear streaks. A kaleidoscope of fantastical colours shine into his cockpit, and in the time it takes him to work through some exposition with his buxom sidekick, Chase StarMinge, he has arrived at another planet, where intriguing plot developments await.

Luke Skywalker didn't think twice about flying from Hoth to Dagobah in his X-Wing, and that thing didn't even have a toilet.

Yet before you start pondering what kind of adventures you'll be getting up to in *Mass Effect 3* with Commander Shepard (or FemShep, if you swing that way), you may wish to pause for a moment to consider the sober facts.

While a tad old school, Newtonian physics adequately describe what any spaceship has to do to get from A to B: 'every action has an equal and opposite reaction.' Car tyres can grip on roads and jet turbines churn air, but in a vacuum there's nothing to push against. To move forward, you must spurt something out the back. That something is called 'reaction mass', and when it runs out, a space ship becomes space junk.

Probes take years to get anywhere because they can only carry so much reaction mass. The kick from their launch vehicles was basically all the boost they get, hence

Space Cadets

Most gamers know John Carmack as the genius programmer who founded id Software and the man who created the technology behind *Doom*, *Quake*, and *RAGE*. But you may not be aware that in recent years he has grown weary of the challenge of merely coding game engines, and has set about reinventing the space ship industry, too. Armadillo Aerospace is Carmack's latest venture, a firm that is making revolutionary developments in the field of rocket motors that use electronic fuel injection. The result? A new generation of fuel-efficient thrusters that may soon make single-stage-to-orbit launchers a reality. Thunderbirds are GO!



Rule number one: no showers. Number two? No flushing either

the decades-old Pioneer and Voyager probes are only just reaching interstellar space. 'Ion drives' that eject mass in a steady dribble instead of fitful bursts have the potential to get interplanetary travel times down to weeks, but don't get your hopes up — there's a dearth of potential holiday destinations in this star system. Mars is colder than Antarctica, and daytime temperatures on Pluto are around -240 degrees Celsius; close to absolute zero.

As for interstellar travel, it may be feasible for a ship to use a 'fuel scoop', like the one on the Red Dwarf, to suck up stray hydrogen atoms to fuel fusion-powered rockets. But the distances between stars are measured in light YEARS. Even a trip to Proxima Centauri would realistically take decades, and any volunteers for such a mission would sign up knowing full well they might die of old age before they even got

there. That's assuming the micro-society on such a colony ship could hold together that long, without succumbing to the lunacy that infected the Vaults of *Fallout*, or undersea city of Rapture, for that matter (see last month).

That's assuming a ship big enough to carry decades worth of water, food and air could even be built.

Noting that dying of old age in a tin can isn't a particularly sexy way to travel, today's hard-sci fi authors typically write of cyborg space jocks who've uploaded their minds into computers, so they can simply slow-down their clock cycles to escape the soul-reaming boredom of their jobs.

As Scotty used to say, 'ye cannae change the laws of physics.' Until someone figures out how to break the rules of the universe we'll all be stuck right here on Terra Firma.

NUMBER CRUNCHING

50

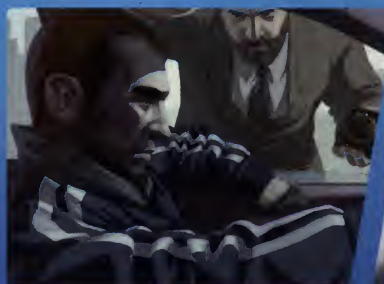
◀ The hours of dialogue contained in *L.A. Noire*

92

▲ The number of exhibitors already scheduled for E3 2011

Separated at Birth!

NO. 24 Niko Bellic? Vladimir Mashkov wants his striped tracksuit and fingerless gloves back



Vladimir Mashkov, Sasha the Serbian sniper in the 2001 thriller *Behind Enemy Lines*, appears to have had his entire wardrobe plundered by fellow Serb Niko Bellic. Niko's actual nationality is never clearly specified in *GTA IV*, although he speaks and reads Serbian. It's not just the clobber they share in common though; the receding hair and angular features are there too. Still, Niko's a bit handier to have around. Sasha couldn't even kill Owen Wilson.

► INFOCUS

BULLETSTORM

If, for any reason, *Bulletstorm*'s developer decides to add an unnecessary subtitle to the shooter, it could be *Bring Back The Boot*. Take a look at this artwork, which isn't too far removed from the action you'll see in-game.

That bloke at the front – the one with an *outline of a shoe* painting his solar plexus – is in all sorts of trouble. He's just been kicked to death for points, which then can be turned into currency for more bullets.

Launch a man to his doom using your size 11's and you can then yank him into the spiky environment, shoot him in the head or just boot him one more time for good measure. This isn't a game that relies on realism for its kicks (so to speak): it's a celebration of arcade shooters. Craving over-the-top action? Keep an eye on this.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A ... FOOTBALL SUPERSTAR?

OPTION 1

Soccer, or football (take your pick), may not have the national following that Rugby League or Aussie Rules enjoys, but the international rewards are much greater and widely publicised – consider the amount of films and games made either about soccer players or the sport itself.

Striker John Aloisi is currently playing for Melbourne Heart in the A-League. He's probably most famous for nailing the penalty that took the Socceroos into the World Cup in 2006. He also has dogged determination.

Like many sports you need to start young. Aloisi started playing football at five years of age, and then started playing professionally at age 16. He's now 35 and will finish playing on a professional basis at the end of this year and go into coaching. In his youth he would be at practice sessions, but also spend a couple of hours each night in the backyard with the ball, either with his brother, or dribbling between cones.

As a pro, you need to learn to take injuries. Not just the physical pain, but the mental stress of being on the bench watching everyone else play and then working hard to get back up that level of fitness. Step into the role of a striker and you're the one that's blamed for the team losing if no goals are scored, but then a winning goal can make you the best player in the world. "You have to know you're not as good as they say you are and you're not as bad as what they say you are," Aloisi tells us.

Say you do make it to the English Premier League or the Italian Serie A. Congratulations, you've just taken the spot of a local player, so be wary of resentment. If you can speak the local language you're one step ahead, but otherwise you'll need to take language classes to help you fit into the culture. You may not have any family around you, so you have to overcome the isolation.

And you need to ignore the pressure of a huge, huge crowd, especially in game-clinching moments where you need to score a penalty to put your team through to the World Cup. Your body is a temple, so it doesn't pay to abuse it with a poor diet.

TIME:

Aloisi began at five and turned pro at 16. He's one of the lucky ones, enjoying a professional career of more than 12 years. Many footballers last three to five years, and are constantly training.

OPTION 2

Turn on FIFA 11

TIME:

60 seconds



► INTERVIEW

Home Sweet Homefront

Dave Votypka, creative director on *Homefront*, on 2011's most intriguing new shooter



The Bridge on the River Die

OPS: Talk to us about the tone of the game. It's hugely confronting and bleak. Is this what you're going for?

DV: *Homefront* definitely has a dark tone. We wanted to explore the 'human cost' of war – to try and show the real, brutalising effects not just on combatants but, more importantly, civilians. So you can expect to see some pretty harrowing scenes. At E3 we showed the guerrilla resistance assaulting a KPA stronghold, and using white phosphorous to decimate the defences. White phosphorous is a horrific weapon, and we want the player to feel uncomfortable using it and seeing the effects. John Milius actually provided the idea for that particular scene – his input was that the resistance have to be brutal themselves, they have to resort to desperate tactics if they're going to win against this overwhelming military force. Rather than take the Hollywood approach, we want to show players the real consequences of violence, and that takes us to some dark places.

"Homefront's characters are one small part of the larger picture"

OPS: This game lends itself to guerrilla-style combat; how will the combat differ from other mainstream first-person shooters?

DV: Typically, the current glut of modern shooters cast you as a highly trained bad-ass with all the best kit, and a wave of military hardware to support you. In *Homefront*, the enemy has that military superiority. So in a lot of the single player campaign, you are the one being hunted or chased through the level. Rather than have someone bark 'Take objective A' in your ear, you are the guy on objective A and it's about to be taken from you. And when you fall back to 'B', they'll come and take that too. You'll be constantly outnumbered and outgunned, so guerrilla tactics, hit and run strategies are a necessity.

OPS: Are weapons and ammunition going to be readily available or is there a big emphasis on player exploration and scavenging?

DV: We want to strike the balance to make the game fun – it's really important to maintain the pace of the game, so we don't want players to have to stop and loot bodies after every gunfight and count every last bullet. However there certainly is an element of needing to utilise enemy weaponry on the fly. The Resistance is not a fully armed military force, the idea is that they need to obtain weaponry however they can, and use it against the enemy.

OPS: How involved has John Milius been in the project?

DV: Heavily. The original concept for the game came from within Kaos, but the premise was heavily inspired by *Red Dawn*, which John wrote and directed. He's a personal friend and former mentor of Danny Bilson, THQ's EVP of core games, and when we were given the opportunity to have him work with us on the game we jumped at the chance. John has contributed to the scenario, the script, and drafted specific scenes – such as the white phosphorous example above. He really helped us understand how the resistance would have to act if they were to have any credible chance of success against the KPA, along with the attitudes they would need to have if they were to convincingly sell the idea and the human aspect. One key contribution along these lines was John's insistence that the story revolve around a small group of people, who have a small but significant mission. Rather than saving the entire country yourself James Bond style, *Homefront's* characters are one small part of the larger picture. The result is a highly relatable human story, and it

sounds obvious in hindsight, but game fiction too often trends toward the super soldier that surmounts impossible odds, making the story, and action, less believable.

OPS: What about destruction?

DV: In pre-production we experimented with increasing the amount of dynamic destruction we had in *Frontlines*, but found that this actually detracted from the experience. We use what we call 'environmental narrative' throughout our level design to tell the story of occupied USA, and allowing this environment to be destroyed takes away a lot of what we achieve with this. In multiplayer, because of our focus on lots of vehicles with heavy firepower on the map at all times, destruction would remove a lot of the structures we placed there to support the infantry game and help balance that infantry versus vehicle mechanic. For example, in our map 'Farm' there's a wooden church with a belfry that's perfect for sniping. If we allowed this to be destroyed early in the game, it would remove that tactical option from the map for the rest of the match.

OPS: The viral campaign with Korean propaganda was alarmingly authentic; any other scare tactics you can talk about before launch?

DV: We could tell you, but we'd probably have to kill you. Keep your eyes open is all we can say. We have a few more surprises in store.

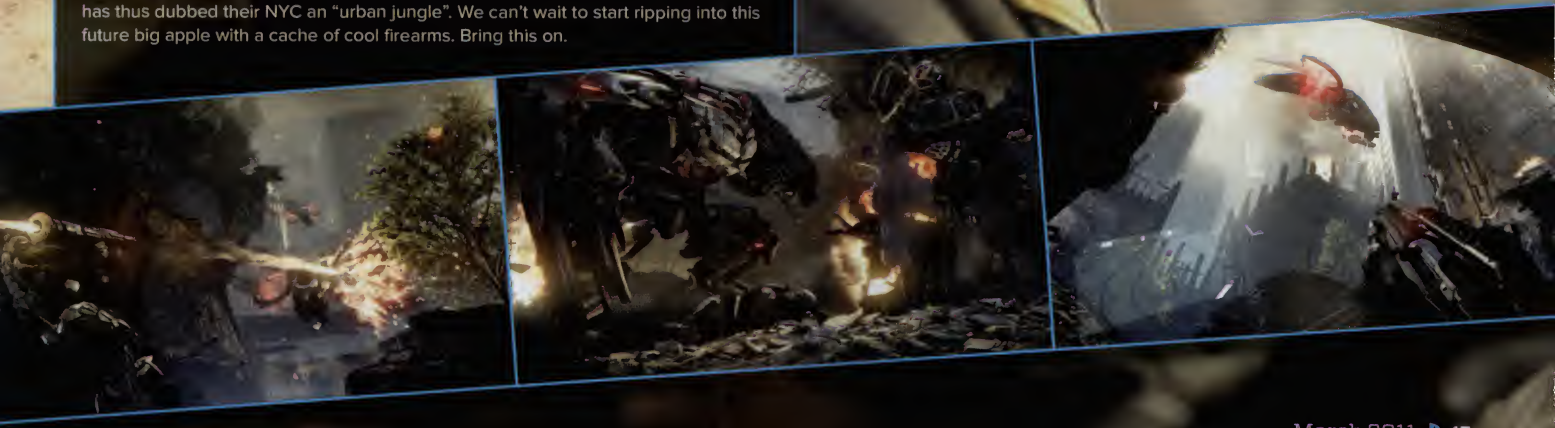
► INFOCUS

CRYSIS 2

The word 'pretty' doesn't even come close to giving *Crysis 2* its just dues. This ravishing creature is the sort of game that seduces retinas, blows minds and accidentally sets eyelids on fire.

Set in the year 2023, *Crysis 2* tells the tale of a New York City which has been evacuated due to alien infestation. Playing as a super green beret known as 'Alcatraz', you're given access to a Nanosuit that offers the freedom to customise your skills on the fly. Want to be a tank on two legs? Boost your armour. Want to jump like the Predator? Divert power to your legs. Want fatter, more lustrous lashes? Go grab a copy of *Cosmo*, you picked up the wrong mag again.

Hoping to create a non-jungle-based title that is a far cry from *Far Cry*, Crytek has thus dubbed their NYC an "urban jungle". We can't wait to start ripping into this future big apple with a cache of cool firearms. Bring this on.



▶ TOP TEN

GAMES THAT HAVE Celebrity Cameos

At best, a celebrity cameo in a videogame can brighten one's day. But more often it'll result in your brain spitting out a three letter acronym (sometimes OMG, more likely WTF). Here is a collection of some of the greatest.



1

Mikhail Gorbachev Street Fighter II

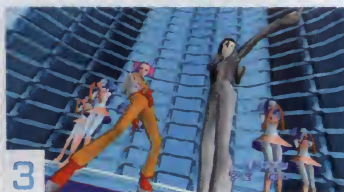
In *Street Fighter II*, when you take down M. Bison as the burly and heavily bearded Ruski Zangief, you're actually greeted by the former President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev (a man who's been awarded both a Nobel Peace Prize and a Grammy Award). He thanks Zangief for his glorious fighting for make benefit the wondrous peoples of the Soviet Republic. Then they do a traditional Russian dance.



2

Phil Collins Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories

Possibly the greatest mission in any GTA title is this one, where you have run interference for Phil Collins as hired goons try to kill him during an epic performance of his hit 'In The Air Tonight'. Then, you can go to a concert in-game and watch him play.



3

Michael Jackson Space Channel 5

The story goes that for some reason Jacko was shown a near-complete build of *Space Channel 5* and he was so impressed he asked to be put into the game. His cameo in *Space Channel 5* turned into a full-fledged role in *Part 2*.



4

Kelly Slater Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

Kelly Slater had his own game at the time, but the gimmick here was that he didn't ride a skateboard, he still rode a surfboard. The result was the extremely strange sight of a shirtless man in shorts riding a surfboard on an invisible cushion of air. Kooky.



5

Barrack Obama Madden NFL 11

Win the Super Bowl in *Madden NFL 11* and you'll be treated to a lengthy montage of your players celebrating and being blanketed in confetti. You'll even get to present a personalised Obama jersey to the President himself.



6

Ricky Gervais Grand Theft Auto IV

Ricky Gervais, fresh from tearing the Golden Globes a new anus, was tearing through zingers in Liberty City's Split Sides Comedy Club in Star Junction. You didn't know that? Go to a comedy club in-game and watch a real-life comedian perform.



7

Fred Durst Fight Club

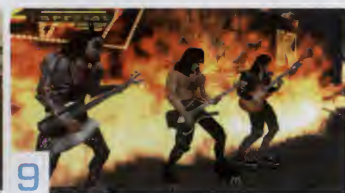
Never mind that a novel-turned-movie with a strong anti-consumerist theme was turned into a cheap and nasty videogame tie-in; why the hell was Fred Durst in it? The only conceivable reason is that someone on the dev team really wanted to beat the living piss out of Fred Durst.



8

Snoop Dogg True Crime: Streets of LA

Collect 30 Dogg Bones that are scattered around the game world and you could play as The Doggfather. The former Crips member and ex-crim penned a track for the game, and thus plausibly assumed he should be in the game.



9

KISS Tony Hawk's Underground

Collect the letters K-I-S-S and you'd trigger a sudden KISS mini concert, where the band would arrive on stage and perform 'God of Thunder'. The pyrotechnics look a bit lame these days but at the time it was a pretty nifty little bonus.



10

George W. Bush NBA Jam

Anybody who doesn't think this former President of the United States of America (and the only man who knows exactly how the human being and fish are going to coexist peacefully) can dunk has seriously underestimated one George W. Bush. Who said white men can't jump? Certainly not Bill Clinton, minus his stogie, who also appears. We'd like to see JFK and Nixon at some point, too.



► INFOCUS

MARVEL VS
CAPCOM 3

Oh yes. Forgive us as we assume partial credit for this next fact, as a few *OPS* staffers have pestered Capcom staff at various times to revive Haggar in a new game. Now, Metro City's mayor has been confirmed as a playable character in Capper's upcoming fighting crossover.

The series is renowned for being brash, loud, wild but still tactical, compared to the more

paced, chess-like *Street Fighter*. These screens look pretty but hide the fact that in motion it's a cacophony of characters, a light-show of fists on fists, and is wildly entertaining.

We're told the storyline will actually matter this time. Honestly, we don't care. It looks absolutely sensational, begging for endless nights of saying "just one more go" as you and your mates pick the most outrageous teams possible. Review soon.



► IN YOUR FACE

Game duration: Is bigger, better?

Are we doing videogames a disservice by claiming all the best ones are too short?



Luke Reilly

NO

Luke is of the firm opinion it's not the length that matter; it's how you use it. He'd beat a giant cheeseburger in a fair fight.

I still don't know where this argument came from in the first place.

Is it even valid to judge a game by its length? I don't hear people lambasting books or movies for being too short.

This is a size argument, and it's an argument that's unfair on developers and unfair on games. Gamers are always quick to declare videogames qualify as art but can be equally quick to cry foul when a game they've just purchased is over in matter of hours.

What they don't grasp, I feel, is that criticising a videogame for being too short instantly takes it out of the art space and turns it into nothing more than a simple consumable. A giant cheeseburger is better than a small cheeseburger. A long game is better than a short game.

Of course, it's flawed mathematics. Saying *Black Ops* would be better if it was longer is like saying the Mona Lisa would be better if it was bigger. It doesn't make any sense. It assumes bigger is always better.

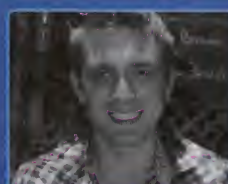
It's incorrect because it relies on the quality remaining static, which it invariably wouldn't. Double the length of a great game and you need to halve the quality of something else. Suddenly your small yet incredibly tasty cheeseburger isn't a giant and equally tasty cheeseburger. It's a bucket full of stale buns. Bigger, sure. But more satisfying? No.

At any rate, games never used to be 20, 10, or even five hours long. 20 years ago you'd be lucky for a game to last more than an hour (once you knew how to play it). I understand bang-for-your-buck but we need to stop writing off games solely on length.

Let me tell you a story. Oh, wait, I can't because *I don't have enough room*. On page 23 of this issue, videogame creator and dead-set legend Warren Spector effectively said evolving the storyline in videogames is more important than just making the visuals flashier. He said the need to make the graphics prettier bores him. In order to craft a truly, rich, engaging storyline with gravitas you need some room, son, and gamers are craving this.

Firstly, because we love to be entertained. Why do you want to deny or cut short the length of that entertainment in narrative driven experiences? Second, for sheer, bloody means-to-an-end reasoning, craft an excellent story into a game and you finally, finally convince the doubters that games can be held in the same esteem as movies. It's a pretty ordinary comparison because games are not movies (movies are passive, games are interactive). It's like comparing cheeseburgers with the Mona Lisa.

You don't need to artificially increase length for the sake of it. Just make your game more engrossing. Create a legend rather than an also ran. Give me something I can shout about at the pub. We have Blu-ray drives, discs that can hold up to 50GB of data. 50! We have a machine that can hold roughly six times as much stuff as its nearest competitor. There's potential for PS3 owners to possess a title that isn't hampered – visually, aurally and in terms of narrative – by being shoehorned onto a disc that's a fraction of the one we have available. Make my games bigger.



Paul Taylor

YES

Paul knows that the length of something is best appreciated slowly, carefully and prefers a three course meal instead of a burger.

Want to hear more of the *OPS* team disagreeing with each other? Check out our Podcast available on side B of our cover disc. Want to get into a great debate with one of us, or a fellow reader? Hop onto www.facebook.com/OPSAustralia and make your case. The best topics may find their way into the magazine.

insane

GAMING SATIRE

FROM THE MAKERS OF HOPSCOTCH: UNLEASHED
AND UNICYCLES UNTAMED: CE DX
COMES...



TALLY, HO.

"MY WORD!" - GENTLEMANLY GAMER
"BY JOVE!" - CRACKINGGAMES.NET.AU
"JOLLY GOOD, QUITE RIGHT" - SIR.COM



Around the World in PS3

OPS trawls high and low for what's going on around the globe in gaming



▲ ART OF CODE

🇺🇸 PENNSYLVANIA, USA

Wesley Snipes, star of films such as *Blade*, *Passenger 57* and *Demolition Man*, now a convicted tax-evader, is developing a videogame in prison. Teaming up with Lapland Studios, mostly known for creating software on other consoles, Snipes' game will be called *Julius Styles: The International* and is set to come to PSN this year. The game will be followed by a movie following his release in 2013. "*Julius Styles* pits your street knowledge survival skills with your academic intellect and spiritual intuition," said Snipes.



▲ NOT A BLAST

🇺🇸 KENTUCKY, USA

Five students from Stuart Middle School face being charged as terrorists after a teacher found a map of the school with notes on where bombs might be placed. After its discovery the school was swept for explosives. None were found. Nor was there a date for when a possible attack may happen. The school district's public information officer, Lauren Roberts, noted that the map "may have been associated with a fantasy video game". Better scrap those plans you had on making a shooter map of your school/uni/workplace ASAP.



▲ OB-BLUR-TERATED

🇬🇧 LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

Bizzare Creations, the studio behind *Blur*, *The Club* and *Blood Stone*, is likely to be closed, as Activision was unable to find a buyer for the group. After spending three months looking for an investor, Activision recommended the studio be shut as the group could not be kept as a single business. Speaking to Develop Online, Activision COO Cuddy Johnson said "We've looked at all options. I want to be clear, our first choice was to try and keep this group together and find a buyer for the studio." Any takers?



▲ POWER UP

🇬🇧 ADDIEWELL, SCOTLAND

Criminals in Addiewell Prison have been using the jail's PS3 to charge up their mobile phones. While the inmates are rewarded with the consoles, and also have flat screen TVs in their cells, they're not allowed mobile phones. Cunningly, the prisoners have modified the USB cables from the jail's mice to plug into their phones, and after officials found some of the peripherals missing all mice must now be handed in after English, Maths and computer classes. We're surely only two steps away from some A-Team action.



▲ BIRD BRAIN

🇸🇦 RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

This would be an amazing, absurd reward as a killstreak in *Call of Duty*. Saudi press have speculated that a rare griffon vulture, a species with a wing span of up to 265cm, was sent by Israeli spy agency Mossad after the bird was found to have a GPS transmitter attached to it, in order to gather information. Israeli academics have labelled the suggestion as being absurd. It's more plausible that the data from GPS would be used to understand the endangered species behaviour.

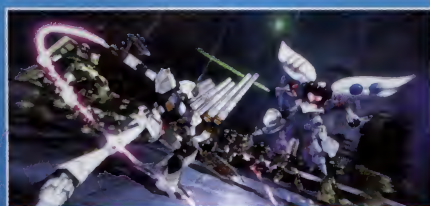
INTERNATIONAL TOP 10 CHARTS

🇪🇺 EUROPE



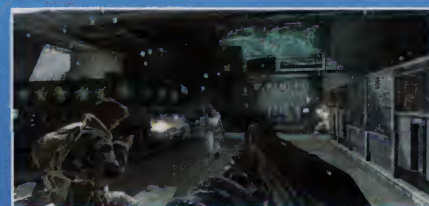
- 1 **Gran Turismo 5** Sony
- 2 **Call of Duty: Black Ops** Activision
- 3 **FIFA 11 EA**
- 4 **Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit** EA
- 5 **Assassin's Creed Brotherhood** Ubisoft
- 6 **Fallout: New Vegas** Bethesda
- 7 **Medal of Honor** EA
- 8 **The Sims 3** EA
- 9 **Red Dead Redemption** Rockstar
- 10 **Buzz! The Ultimate Music Quiz** Sony

🇯🇵 JAPAN



- 1 **Gundam Musou 3** Namco Bandai
- 2 **Gran Turismo 5** Sony
- 3 **World Soccer Winning Eleven 2011** Konami
- 4 **Call of Duty: Black Ops** Square Enix
- 5 **Tales of Graces f** Namco Bandai
- 6 **Castlevania: Lords of Shadow** Konami
- 7 **BioHazard 5** Capcom
- 8 **Sports Champions** Sony
- 9 **Assassin's Creed Brotherhood** Ubisoft
- 10 **Atelier Totori** Gust

🇺🇸 USA



- 1 **Call of Duty: Black Ops** Activision
- 2 **Gran Turismo 5** Sony
- 3 **Assassin's Creed Brotherhood** Ubisoft
- 4 **FIFA Soccer 11** EA
- 5 **Need for Speed Hot Pursuit** EA
- 6 **Sports Champions** Sony
- 7 **Fallout: New Vegas** Bethesda
- 8 **Medal of Honor** EA
- 9 **Madden NFL 11** EA
- 10 **Red Dead Redemption** Rockstar

THIS MONTH

Your 30-day planner of games and the good stuff!



Feb 10

Test Drive Unlimited 2

The original *Test Drive Unlimited* was an excellent concept hampered by last gen's tech. Now, though, the open world racer is back with tonnes of fast, lush cars as you live the life of a wannabe racer on the party island of Ibiza. Not content with just one sun-soaked island paradise? No worries, because the developer has crammed Hawaii back in for good measure.



Feb 12

Good Vibrations

The festival begins its tour in Sydney, followed by Melbourne (13th), Gold Coast (19th) and Perth (20th). Expect to see Faithless, Milke Snow, The Ting Tings, Sasha, Kelis and more.



Feb 17

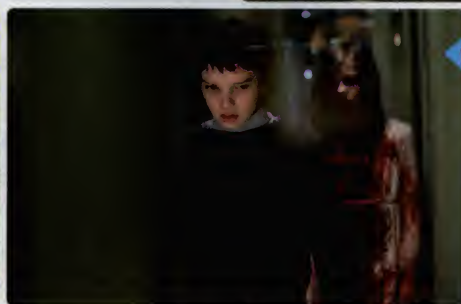
Marvel Vs Capcom 3

Even without Haggar at our fingertips in our preview build, we're hooked. It continues the series' tradition of mad cross-overs between Marvel characters and Capcom series legends.

ICC Cricket World Cup

The tenth Cricket World Cup begins today in India, and finishes up on April 2. Australia plays and hopefully decimates the Zimbabwean side on Feb 21, while New Zealand face off - and demolish - Kenya on Feb 20.

Feb 19



Feb 23

Let Me In

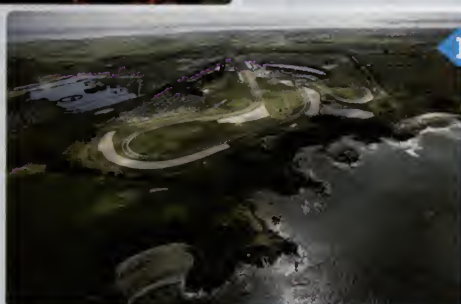
In this film based on the Swedish flick, *Let the Right One In*, Abby (Chloe Moretz) is a 12-year-old girl who is also a vampire. Living next door is Owen (Kodi Smit-McPhee), a boy who is bullied at school. He finds a friend in Abby, but is, at first, unaware of her 'condition'. After a series of grisly murders, Owen has to confront his neighbour's secret. The perfect antithesis to *Twilight*, it's available on Blu-ray and DVD today.



Feb 24

Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together

This tactical RPG title, available on PSP, is an update of a PSone game, and is from the creators of *Final Fantasy Tactics*, *Vagrant Story* and *Final Fantasy XII*. Amazing heritage, then.



Feb 25

Phillip Island Superbikes

The Victorian island hosts the first round in the 2011 Superbike World Championship, after two days of exciting, challenging races on the Phillip Island Circuit in other two-wheeler events.

ASP Surfing championship

The Association of Surfing Professionals has its first even in the World Championships on the Gold Coast in Queensland in the Quicksilver Pro. Board riders from all over the world compete for more than \$400,000 in prize money.

Feb 26



Mar 10

Dragon Age II

Not content with delivering one RPG to your PS3 in the first three months of the year, Bioware's follow-up to the excellent *Dragon Age: Origins*. Players follow the story of Hawke as he/she rises to power over a decade of bloody sword fighting.



Can't miss...

Killzone 3 FEBRUARY 24

And so begin the big sequels to Sony's biggest games. Following on from the end of *Killzone 2*, Sev and Rico must battle their way through a struggling Helghast force, an army reeling in the wake of the death of their leader. Check out page 64 for our massive review.

Release Schedule

Release dates, pre-order deals, new information and much more

OUT NOW

DC Universe Online
Genre: MMO Distributor: Sony
Date: January 13

Mass Effect 2
Genre: Action RPG
Distributor: EA Date: January 20

LittleBigPlanet 2
Genre: Platformer
Distributor: Sony Date: January 20

Dead Space 2
Genre: Action Distributor: EA
Date: January 27

MindJack
Genre: Action Distributor: Ubisoft
Date: Feb 10

FEBRUARY 2011

Test Drive Unlimited 2
Genre: Racing Distributor:
Namco Bandai Partners
Date: February 10

**Marvel vs Capcom 3:
Fate of Two Worlds**
Genre: Fighting Distributor: THQ
Date: Feb 18

Bulletstorm
Genre: Shooter Distributor:
EA Date: February 24

de Blob 2
Genre: Platformer Distributor:
THQ Date: February 24

Killzone 3
Genre: Shooter Distributor:
Sony Date: February 24

**LEGO Star Wars III:
The Clone Wars**
Genre: Action-adventure
Distributor: Activision
Date: February 23

Apache: Air Assault
Genre: Flight Sim Distributor:
Activision Date: February 23

Sniper Ghost Warrior
Genre: Shooter Distributor:
AFA Interactive Date: February 24

MARCH 2011

Dragon Age II
Genre: Action RPG Distributor: EA
Date: March 10

Crysis 2
Genre: Shooter Distributor: EA
Date: March 24



SHIFT 2 Unleashed

SHIFT 2 Unleashed
Genre: Racing Distributor: EA
Date: March 24

Nail'd
Genre: Racing Distributor: QVS
Date: March 1

Homefront
Genre: Shooter Distributor: THQ
Date: March 10

Child of Eden
Genre: Puzzle Distributor: Ubisoft
Date: TBC

Fight Night Champion
Genre: Sports Distributor: EA
Date: March 3

APRIL 2011

L.A. Noire
Genre: Action Distributor:
Rockstar Date: TBC

Michael Jackson The Experience
Genre: Dance Distributor:
Ubisoft Date: April 14

SEPTEMBER 2011

Resistance 3
Genre: Shooter Distributor: Sony
Date: TBC

NOVEMBER 2011

Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception
Genre: Action-adventure
Distributor: Sony
Date: TBC

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
Genre: RPG Distributor: Bethesda
Date: TBC

TBC 2011

Final Fantasy XIV Online
Genre: RPG Distributor: Ubisoft
Date: TBC

Mortal Kombat
Genre: Fighting Distributor:
Warner Bros. Date: TBC

Batman: Arkham City
Genre: Action Distributor: Warner
Bros. Date: TBC

Tomb Raider
Genre: Action-adventure
Distributor: Ubisoft Date: TBC

Duke Nukem Forever
Genre: Shooter Distributor: 2K
Date: TBC

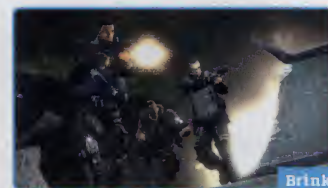
Deus Ex: Human Revolution
Genre: Shooter/RPG Distributor:
Namco Bandai Partners Date: TBC

inFAMOUS 2
Genre: Action Distributor: Sony
Date: TBC

Bodycount
Genre: Shooter Distributor: Namco
Bandai Partners Date: TBC

**Warhammer 40K:
Space Marine**
Genre: Action Distributor: THQ
Date: TBC

The Agency
Genre: Action Distributor: Sony
Date: TBC



Brink

Brink
Genre: Shooter Distributor: Ubisoft
Date: TBC

Spec Ops: The Line
Genre: Action Distributor: 2K
Date: TBC

**Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon:
Future Soldier**
Genre: Action Distributor: Ubisoft
Date: TBC

Mass Effect 3
Genre: Action RPG Distributor: EA
Date: TBC

Metal Gear Solid: Rising
Genre: Action Distributor:
Mindscape Date: TBC

True Crime: Hong Kong
Genre: Action Distributor:
Activision Date: TBC

Portal 2
Genre: Puzzle Distributor: EA
Date: TBC

Hunted: The Demon's Forge
Genre: Action Distributor:
Namco Bandai Partners
Date: TBC

Agent
Genre: Action Distributor:
Rockstar Date: TBC

Arcania: Gothic 4
Genre: RPG Distributor: AFA
Date: TBCC

Ace Combat: Assault Horizon
Genre: Flight Sim Distributor:
Namco Bandai Partners
Date: TBC

► Limited Edition

CRYSIS 2

Whether you play it in stereoscopic or standard 2D, *Crysis 2* drops players into a devastated New York in the midst of an attack by a frightening alien species. Surrounded by catastrophic destruction, players harness the superhuman abilities of the Nanosuit to level the playing field in this shooter from Crytek, becoming the ultimate weapon on a mission to save New York.

Limited Edition includes:

Bonus XP – Players will jump into multiplayer battles with an edge by starting with enough experience points to gain early access to all 5 preset class load-outs.

SCAR Hologram Decoy – This special attachment to the SCAR will project a hologram image of the player, allowing them to confuse their opponents with the decoy.

SCAR Weapon Skin – This digital camouflage skin will allow players to add a personalized touch to one of the more popular assault rifles in the game.

Platinum Dog Tag – This special one-of-a-kind dog tag is one of over 250 that will be collectible in *Crysis 2* multiplayer, helping to separate you from the rest of the field.



GAME \$96 (web only price)
Estimated dispatch date:
24 March 2011

Alice: Madness Returns
Genre: Action Distributor: EA
Date: TBC

DiRT 3
Genre: Racing Distributor: Namco
Bandai Partners Date: TBC

DmC
Genre: Action Distributor: THQ
Date: TBC

Driver: San Francisco
Genre: Racing Distributor: Ubisoft
Date: TBC

El Shaddai: Ascension of the Metatron
Genre: Action Distributor: TBC
Date: TBC

F.E.A.R. 3
Genre: Shooter Distributor: Warner
Bros. Date: TBC

Fight Night Champion
Genre: Sports Distributor: EA
Date: TBC

RAGE
Genre: Adventure Distributor:
Bethesda Date: TBC



The Last Guardian

The Last Guardian
Genre: Adventure Distributor:
Sony Date: TBC

**The Lord of the Rings:
War in the North**
Genre: RPG Distributor: Warner
Bros. Date: TBC

Max Payne 3
Genre: Action Distributor:
Rockstar Date: TBC

Operation Flashpoint: Red River
Genre: Shooter Distributor: Namco
Bandai Partners Date: TBC

Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One
Genre: Platformer Distributor:
Sony Date: TBC

► Pre-order DRAGON AGE II

Experience the epic sequel to the 2009 Game of the Year from the critically acclaimed makers of *Dragon Age: Origins*. You are one of the few who escaped the destruction of your home. Now, forced to fight for survival in an ever-changing world, you must gather the deadliest of allies, amass fame and fortune, and seal your place in history.

Signature Edition includes:

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- In-game digital armoury
- Bonus character and missions
- Downloadable game soundtrack

EB GAMES \$108

Estimated dispatch
date: 10 March 2011
(web only price)

GAME \$99

Estimated dispatch
date: 10 March 2011
(web only price)

JB HIFI \$99

Estimated dispatch
date: March 2011



Red Faction: Armageddon
Genre: Action Distributor: THQ
Date: TBC

Street Fighter X Tekken
Genre: Fighting Distributor: THQ
Date: TBC

Virtua Tennis 4
Genre: Sports Distributor:
SEGA Date: TBC

MotorStorm Apocalypse
Genre: Racing
Distributor: Sony
Date: TBC

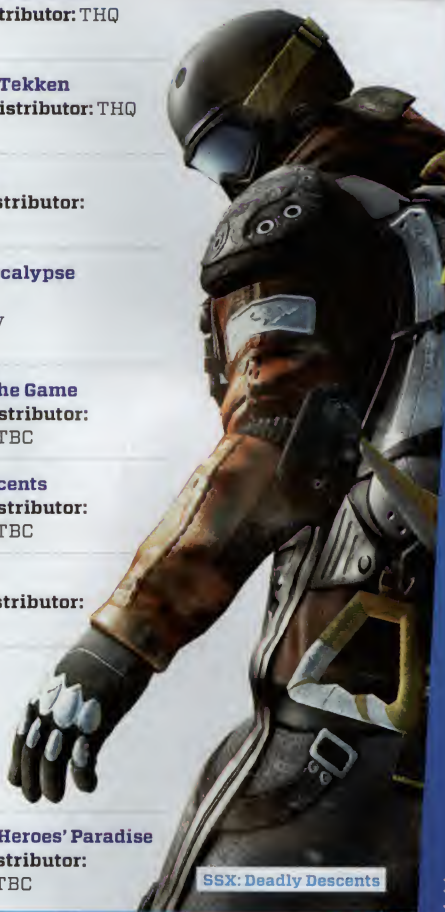
NASCAR 2011: The Game
Genre: Racing Distributor:
Activision Date: TBC

SSX: Deadly Descents
Genre: Racing Distributor:
Activision Date: TBC

Yakuza 4
Genre: Action Distributor:
Sega Date: TBC

**Silent Hill:
Downpour**
Genre: Action
Distributor:
Mindscape
Date: TBC

No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise
Genre: Racing Distributor:
Activision Date: TBC



SSX: Deadly Descents

In their WORDS

Industry chatter, inside tips and loose lips



"The limitations are such that you can't create all the games you want to do"

John Koller, director of hardware marketing for PlayStation, suggests Microsoft Kinect's controller-free interface lacks the cajones to support proper core titles.



"Just watched *The Other Guys*, and honestly excited to see Wahlberg in *Drake's Fortune*. He's got mad skills"

Nathan Fillion, a fan fave for the role of Nathan Drake in the upcoming *Uncharted*

movie, tries to defuse the nerd rage regarding the casting of Marky Mark.

"As for the IP ownership, frankly, after what we'd just been through with Activision, owning the IP we were going to create was important to us"



Respawn Entertainment's Vince Zampella on what thwarted a potential partnership with THQ.



"We just focus on prettier pictures and flashier graphics attached to more impressive combat scenarios, and honestly, that just bores me"

Industry legend Warren Spector (*System Shock* and *Deus Ex*) thinks storytelling is more important than visuals.

► Pre-Order BULLETSTORM

Players step into the role of Grayson Hunt complete with an arsenal of over-the-top combat moves and outrageously large guns. *Bulletstorm*'s 'skillshots' system rewards players for inciting mayhem in the most creative way possible. The more insane the skillshot, the more points players collect to upgrade their character and unlock weapons, which then allows them to execute even more creative moves and exaggerated skillshots.

EB GAMES \$108
Estimated dispatch date:
24 February 2011
(web only price)

GAME \$89
Estimated dispatch date:
24 February 2011
(web only price)

JB HIFI \$105
Estimated dispatch date:
24 February 2011
(web only price)



DEATH TO THE CUTSCENE

Do developers need to rethink the way they approach storytelling? After all, why watch when you can play?

Ladies and gents, prepare your wallets – I want to make a bet. I bet that a game you like has been described as being 'cinematic'. Pretty sure *Mafia II* got this treatment, and *Uncharted 2* would've worn the label. And you were pretty happy, agreeing with the description, content that a game has achieved this higher Zen state of being like a movie.

Screw that. Why should we be preoccupied with games being 'cinematic'? PlayStation rocks up in 1994 – trumpeting amazing graphics as a selling point – and games are packed with CGI cut scenes. Lara Croft makes her way across a snowy ridge with grand swooping camera angles, and then lands in her first tomb. The city in *G-Police* is a swarming metropolis just after pressing start, but after the first animated cutscene the effect is lessened once you're in the game. I guess they were trying to set up the story and the atmosphere, though this divide between looking at smoothly rendered characters, vehicles and environments jars with what you're going to spend eight or so hours actually looking at.


Hideo Kojima knew this. *Metal Gear Solid* was the first game that used its in-game graphics as the vehicle for telling the story outside of the game. Kojima had the insight to make the fight at the end – the point where Gray Fox is trapped under Rex's foot – more intense and emotional than any pre-scripted event, as he put the player in control. Sure, Snake couldn't actually pull the trigger, but it was you doing it and experiencing it in-game.

Mafia II had a whole heap of cutscenes, and the coolest ones – or the ones where the most stuff happened – were the montages. They looked like they'd be the best bits of the game, too: Joe and Vito beating the snot out of someone, Joe and

Vito firing and strafing, rolling in money, having the time of their freaking lives. All in the bit that I can't play. Instead, I have to avoid soap-dropping shenanigans in prison, then run away from my burning house and drive across town in one of the emptiest open-worlds since PlayStation Home.

Is this what makes games cinematic, taking control away from the player and breaking the illusion of being in a game? We're applying a term to games that belongs to movies, and it makes them something that they're not. Movies are a one-way street of entertainment; though you have to engage yourself to understand it you have no direct influence over it – it's a ride to the finish. Of course, many games tell great stories but there has to be a better way to do it than by yanking control from the player when the story kicks up. And, you don't want your game to just be a trek to the credits by walking down corridors and following the prompts.

While it's a bit old, *Half-Life 2* had the right idea by keeping cutscenes to a minimum, and you were always looking through the eyes of Gordon Freeman. Kaos Studios is doing the same thing with its *Red Dawn*-inspired shooter *Homefront* and it looks like it's going to pay off. Everything becomes more personal and fun when you're controlling what's happening to your character on screen, and no cutscenes in a first-person shooter means you're always in character.

So maybe instead of a game being cinematic can't it just be involving? It means there's a relationship between the medium and consumer, and plus if you have a DualShock in your hands there's a pretty good chance you've picked it up to play, not watch. 

“Maybe instead of a game being cinematic can't it just be involving?”



OPINION
Paul Taylor

Paul Taylor has skipped a cutscene or two in his time. He also uses them to make sandwiches and hot beverages. During the winter months, Paul wears a scarf not unlike this one.

A guy
hitting a girl
I reckon that's
way over it



the line

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WALKING AWAY A WINNER

You gotta know when to hold 'em,
and know when to run

I've recently heard online talk of some gamers who pass up sex in order to play games longer. But that isn't what is bothering me today. If people prefer hi-scoring over *actual scoring*, their genitals will soon become withered and useless, they'll take themselves out of the gene pool and stop being a problem.

No, when I heard that my fellow gamers were abstaining from their natural bodily needs it caused me to stop and take stock of what I, myself, ignore in order to get in 'one more checkpoint'. Or six.

Food and water? Yeah, that's a given. The kitchen isn't in line of sight with my TV and your toast always tastes better when it is buttered by another. Fact.

Conversation with family, friends and significant others? Most definitely. The soothing sound of explosions and gunfire help me to filter out incessant nagging and useless information like "some kids are stealing the car", or "the cat's on fire" and "honey, my water just broke".

Rigorous exercise? Certainly not, only a fool would skip that! I get up to change the discs.

At this point in the list I reached 'bowel responsibilities'. And as I was filling in an answer - "my inflatable lounge has extra-large intake valves and 'air' is just the manufacturer's suggested input" - I was ambushed by an old memory. It's a cautionary tale and one that I recommend you all pay attention to.

The time: April 22, 1988, 2300 hours. A mate of mine, Willy, is hoping to beat the top score I'd previously set on *Boulder Dash*. Unfortunately for him, there's no pause function on this Amiga game and he's been going at it (solo and in a pitch black room) for four hours.

So utterly fixated is he upon his task; he's decided to put off a number two requirement which really, *really* ought to be registering as a number one priority.

As the score increases on the screen, so too does the burning need in his guts. His legs twist and contort in ways that'd earn him a high-five from Dhalsim, but this pretzeling can only delay the inevitable for so long.

On the other hand, it's not all bad: the extra adrenaline that comes with this predicament has served to put him 'in the zone'.


The concept of time, the joystick and the screen have long since vanished into the ether. He is in the game, but not of it. He observes with eyes that see through the pixels.

Thirteen points away from success, disaster strikes from the most unlikely of places. An older brother named Brett chooses this as the moment to pounce through the doorway behind Willy with a shiny new megaphone and two full lungs of justice.

Now, it doesn't matter where you were that day - or even if you were conceived yet - I *guarantee* you heard Brett's epic, amplified shriek in some form. It tore through space-time.

What happened next? Well, let's just say that "Willy won at boulder dash". He won *big time*.

Here ends the lesson for today. Hopefully you can now see that there are some things that we, as gamers, should never, *ever* take for granted or delay for the sake of 'a few minutes more'.

Neglect reality for long enough and it'll always find a way to catch up with you and kick you straight in the pants. Heed this nugget of advice. Heed it well. 

"It's a cautionary tale and one that I recommend you all pay attention to"



OPINION
Adam Mathew

Adam Mathew plays lots of games but doesn't have the stomach for gambling. When nature calls he accepts the charges.

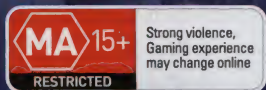
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IT'S A CONSPIRACY, MAN!

If everyone's being bribed, where are all the brown paper bags full of cash?

I have a confession to make. On a number of occasions in the past, I was paid to write a positive review. I was paid by the word; tiny amounts mostly. Usually a week's rent and enough two-minute noodles to sustain an adult human male were all these payments would cover.

Of course, the positive reviews I penned were for great games. The payments I received, naturally, were from my editors and their editorial budgets.

This isn't really a confession at all, in this case. I just wanted to grab your attention.

That said, I remain amazed that people actually think money changes hands in order to secure positive reviews. I truly am. Perhaps I've been spending too much time in the user area of Metacritic.

They're your usual cardboard-sign-waving, end-is-high types mostly. They hover over their computers, bleating about conspiracies and how everyone is bent but them and their fellow truth-seekers.

"Look at all these positive scores for a game that doesn't appeal to my particular interests or is far too popular for my hipster sensibilities to allow me to enjoy it!" they'll exclaim. "That popular publisher of interactive entertainment simply MUST have paid for each and every one of these glowing reviews!"

I'm paraphrasing here; normally these people aren't nearly as eloquent.

Of course, what you need to do is ask yourself is this likely?

There are, of course, a great many people who believe the Apollo moon landings were a hoax. There's also a frightening amount of people who believe 9/11 was a complete hoax too.

It was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes who said, "Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth."

It's the size and complexity of these alleged conspiracy theory scenarios that make their veracity an impossibility.

Let's ignore the fact that the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter has since returned images of the landing sites, and let discount the presence of retroreflectors (mirrors used as targets for Earth-based tracking lasers) left there by the astronauts.

Let's even forget that the Apollo space flights were monitored by third-parties (including the USSR – a then-superpower with its own competing moon program and a massive scientific community able to analyse NASA

data and that could be expected to have cried foul if the United States tried to fake a Moon landing).

More than 400,000 people worked on the Apollo project for nearly 10 years, and a dozen men who walked on the Moon returned to Earth to recount their experiences. Hundreds of thousands of people, including astronauts, scientists, engineers, technicians, and skilled labourers, would have had to keep the secret. According to James Longuski, Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics Engineering at Purdue University contends, it would have been significantly easier to

actually land on the Moon than to generate such a massive conspiracy to fake such a landing.

It's the same story with 9/11. One of the more insane theories doing the rounds claims remote-controlled planes were used for the impacts while the passengers

from the real flights were taken away and executed elsewhere. These wackjobs say the real planes were chopped up for scrap.

How many people would have been required to pull off such an elaborate hoax? Ponder just how many ground personnel and other workers that would've been required to paint and prepare four drones, secretly land four commercial airliners, dismantle them and make the passengers vanish? All without anybody noticing or making a solitary phone call. In the age of Wikileaks it's simply impossible so many people could be coerced into keeping a secret so unbelievably vast.


It's really no different here, only on a far, far nerdier scale.

You can claim a videogame publisher must send out cheques filled with zeroes along with every advance copy of its yearly holiday blockbusters, but it's impossible that such an act would remain secret.

What's more likely? That possibly hundreds of people across the globe are regularly and individually bribed and not one of them has come forward to break what would be the biggest story to hit the geek news sector, ever, or that something you don't like is actually

liked by most other people?

One day folk like these will realise the world doesn't revolve around their personal tastes.

Just not today. 

"One day folk like these will realise the world doesn't revolve around their personal tastes"



OPINION Angry Sackboy

Angry Sackboy is an ex-videogame journalist who knows the truth is out there. It's just not as sexy as most wackos think it is.

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▼ LETTER OF THE MONTH

UNBALANCED

I need someone to share my complaints with. Every single time there is an arcade fighter featuring Marvel or DC, they are all handicapped!

For example, *Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe*. For some stupid reason, Superman, whom we all know to be bulletproof and near invincible unless exposed to kryptonite, is easily able to be killed by an undead assassin with just a sword.

Can't they factor the characters weaknesses into games? (for example, Superman is stabbed by a blade of kryptonite).

Also, any fighter featuring Marvel characters is another hot-spot for weakness. Wolverine has razor-sharp claws and can regenerate and yet he does less damage than a fist fighter and can easily be slain.

Once again, they could feature his powers into the game (Wolverine could regenerate while blocking, as an example).

I can only wait until *Marvel vs Capcom 3* is released so that I may be able to relax my complaints.

Keep up the awesome work.

Matt Landells, via email

Hey Matt. In some ways we can totally see what you're saying: Wolverine and Superman would mop the floor with 99 per cent of the bozos put before them. Undead ninjas, or otherwise.

But would you really want to play a game titled: *Wolvey and Supes Kill Everybody: Unleashed*. No, wait – that sounds awesome. Let us rephrase.

Imagine how boring and pointless it would be having any other characters in a fighting game who weren't realistic Wolverine or actual Superman. You'd essentially be left with a two character fighting game. And bugger paying money for that.

Character nerfing is a simultaneously annoying and necessary evil of any crossover fighting game. When two universes collide, something's gotta give.

Typically, some weaklings have to be made stronger and some demigods must be made mortal. For example: in *MvC3* Mike Haggar will have one hand tied behind his back to give The Hulk a fighting chance.

Speak to us!

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on *OPS*, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

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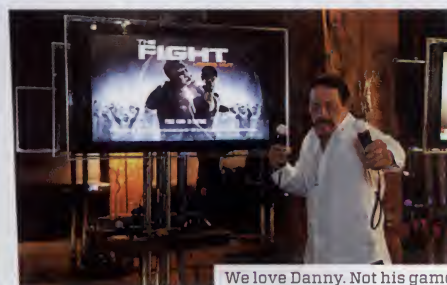
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LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS A COPY OF:

KILLZONE 3

Congratulations Matt. Eye-gouge some Helghast for us!



We love Danny. Not his game

I HAVE BEEN MOVED

Hi OPS,

Santa Clause slid his fat arse down our imaginary chimney and brought me an extra Move (already had starter kit), and also *The Fight: Lights Out*.

I was pleasantly surprised with this piece of software. Saying that, I went into it thinking of it as a modern piece of exercise equipment. I have a long bag hanging in my yard, but due to a back injury, am unable to use that. In fact, most days I am unable to do much at all. But after receiving these for Chrissy, I was hanging for a day when my back was pain-free, and functional enough to give this a go.

Now, I have seen reviews as low as 3 for this game, and while I am not delusional enough to think it deserves a 9 or 10, I think the developers have done a pretty damn nice job for a first Move enabled title and it is a unfair kick in the teeth to give this game criminally low scores it has been getting. I mean, for mine, the graphics are top notch, the sound is also great, and all the other parts of the production are up there and seem well done.

So to me, it seems like reviewers have gone into this game with the totally wrong idea, and have thought of it as only a game, or piece of entertainment software, whereas I think the attitude needed to review this game/exercise software would be of just that, a game themed exercise program.

I urge fight fans, fight game fans, gamers who want a fun way to get fitter and lose weight, exercise junkies, and anyone else who doesn't mind the fact that they will have to put some hard work of the reality based physical kind to get the most out of this great game. I mean, sure the game has it's fair share of technical problems, but what game doesn't?

The Fight: Lights Out is easily deserving of an 8/10 for a first effort in a Move based fighting game. I waved my arms around in different directions, angles, and so and so forth, and it tracked my movements perfectly.

The only area the game lets itself down is the fact that it sticks to traditional stat upgrade based fare in regards to speed, strength, stamina and such. I can't understand why for the love of god, the developer stuck with a non-Move type upgrade system, instead of the game relying on the players real speed, stamina and so on.

But anyway, even with that blemish, the game is a blast, and offers something totally unique from the *Tekken*s, *SFIV*s, etc, etc, and is the only game of it's type for the Move. I mean it runs rings around the Wii boxing game, and I found that to be quite fun for a short time.

Thanks for allowing my rant, and print this one for me, as I'm beginning to think you guys don't like me.

Keiran Stibbard, via email

First up, our apologies for chopping down your rant to a more useable size, Keiran. It was that or give you the whole letters spread. Which wouldn't be fair to everyone else.

While we respect your passion – and are glad to hear that *The Fight* has helped you by being a cheaper alternative to physio – we're going to have to



Guard rails are for sissies who want to live longer

“Being a fan of the series since its birth, I can’t help but think: is that it?”

respectfully disagree with your 8/10 projection.

As an exercise tool *The Fight* represents decent cardio – and, hey, we appreciate a good work out. But as a piece of *interactive entertainment* it’s an average ride at best. At worst it’s a haymaker to the junk.

Also, it’s a bit of a cop-out to rate things based on it being a first effort. We’re much more likely to play *Sports Champions* later in the year than ever turn on *The Fight*.

But in the end, opinions will always vary. If you manage to get something out of it, that’s all that ever really matters in the long run.

GRIND TURSIMO 5

I have recently thrown down the DualShock controller after a very awesome four hour session on *Gran Turismo 5*, which I received for Christmas. I must, at this point, throw a quick thank you to the wife who pretty much allowed this session whilst she minded our five month old daughter.

I have to say that I feel disappointed. In *GT5* I have almost completed all the A-Spec events available. I can’t help but feel that there isn’t enough content with regard to A-Spec part of this game. B-Spec infuriated me as it is a fair mirror of all the A-Spec events!

Seasonal Events, although somewhat challenging, don’t really fill the void either and I can’t help but feel this is simply an afterthought. The Special Events are awesome, but, I don’t think there is enough of them.

I have managed to purchase a competitor console with *Forza 3* and I’m not even half way through all the events in that game. It also had monthly DLC in the form of car packs and I don’t really see *GT5* releasing the same content.

I have two other concerns. One is why bother putting in over a 1000 cars into this game when I have literally used five per cent of them to progress as far as I have?! The *GT1* remember from back in the day included a lot more races and cups which encompassed a greater variety of cars required. The second whinge is – why did this game take so long to release?

The reason that I ask this is because, in all honesty, I didn’t look at *GT5* and say, “Holy smokes – I know why we waited so long this game. It looks superb”.

I expected more from this series *OPS* and although I don’t disagree with anything that you have said on this game – being a fan of the series since its birth, I can’t help but think: is that it?

Anyway – I’m still reading every issue of this mag – I love it that much I got the inlaws to get me a subscription for Christmas! Thanks guys, keep up the great work.

Wade Rushton, via email

Hey Wade, glad you like the mag. You have some valid points about *GT5* there.

We remain hugely impressed with *GT5* from a technical standpoint but, like you, we feel dedicating half the game’s events to B-Spec mode was a bad move. This a niche mode the vast majority of players just aren’t interested in. We’d love to see the stats on how many players are actually even bothering with B-Spec. The game really ought to have twice as many events and, rather than segregating A-Spec and B-Spec, let you either race them yourself or use an AI driver.

We also agree that having 1000 cars is pointless if we can’t use them. The new Online Dealership has helped us find a number of cars we were tired of waiting for to randomly appear in the game’s used

car lot, but the system is flawed. If there’s 1000 cars in the game let us see them all! Let us buy the ones we want! Stop hiding them!

With regards to DLC, Polyphony will be (and has been) supporting and streamlining the game in a number of worthy ways. There have been a number of meaningful (and large) updates since release that improve the game. It’s odd, given they had a full six years to work out the kinks, but welcome nonetheless.

Hopefully the improvements seen in the 1.05 update are just the tip of the iceberg with *GT5*. For example: recently on Red Bull’s official blog there is a substantial discussion with Rhys Millen (drift racer and Tanner Foust’s co-star in the US *Gran Turismo* PSP commercial) about the fastest way up the Pikes Peak rally course in *GT5*.

As *GT* fans will tell you (possibly with a face flushed red from arousal), Pikes Peak isn’t in *GT5* – it hasn’t featured in the series since *GT2*. It’s all unconfirmed at the time of writing, but it gives us mucho hope for the future of *GT5* DLC. As for car packs? We’ve heard nothing but we’re hoping to see plenty. Our hearts want a GTHO Phase III, a Torana A9X and a few utes – but at the very least *GT5* needs more of the world’s best 2010-2011 models. Keep the faith.

SHORT AND SWEET

Dear OPS,

Reaching 50 magazines just further enhances your awesomeness.

Robert Schmidt, via email

Man, we’ve been waiting for somebody to say that. Thanks, Rob

Thank you all for keeping us in a gig and making all that possible. Here’s to another 50 – we couldn’t do it without you.

Cuttings

► Cold souls

Slowly starting to give up on *Demon’s Souls*
Josef Emarosa Barker,
via Facebook

Slowly? Dude, drop that turkey and go for *Mass Effect 2* instead.

► Yeah boyee!

Sackboy was right. When I chose female in *Mass Effect 2* demo she was awesome, but the male was just really boring
Saed Batshon, via Facebook

Sackboy’s always right. Why are you surprised by this?

► Gaming like it’s 1995

Who remembers the genre “survival horror”? I do and I miss the hell out of it.
David Whitby, via Facebook

The genre didn’t survive, oh the horror? Give *Dead Space 2* a go.

► Rank and file

What prestige level is everyone in *BLOPS*? I’ve seen some people and they’re already prestige 15. Nerds much, or just plain enjoy the game?
Nicholas Philipoff,
via Facebook

Our jobs prevent us from climbing the... *BLOPS*... ladder with much speed. Let those who pull rank continue to do so, we say.

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What deliciousness have you bought lately?



Shaun Taylor

Need for Speed Hot Pursuit

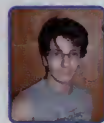
“Need For Speed Hot Pursuit: 35+ hours of fun for the Platinum, I highly recommend it!”



Thomas Gilpin

NBA JAM

“It’s ON FIRE!”



Matthew Falzon

Fallout: New Vegas

“Such a long game, doubled by it freezing”



Phillip Lyons

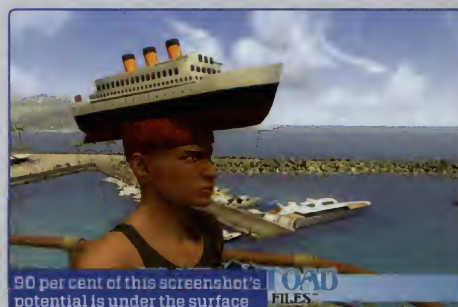
Flight Control HD

“Got myself Flight Control HD quite addictive and fun with the move”

Caption This ►

You put the words to the screen. Simple.

Deftly dodging jokes about seamen comes Ryan Jemmeson’s slow burner. *Ship* just got real.



90 per cent of this screenshot’s potential is under the surface

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guy trapped in the dark you'll be absolutely hooked.

We have one major pack consisting of *Buried* on Blu-ray, a *Buried* T-shirt, a coffin 4GB USB drive, a Zippo Satin Chrome lighter, and a Maglite Torch, as well as a new release pack from Icon featuring the horror-drama *Let Me In*, action-horror *Paintball* and the action-adventure *14 Blades*, valued at \$346. For 15 other lucky subscribers we have a copy of *Buried* to give away on Blu-ray, valued at \$44.95 – a fine addition next to a brand new copy of OPS every month for a year!

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Tomb R

A rebirth you may not survive

The raggedy man with the knife approaches with a maddening calm. Unarmed and bleeding from the shipwreck, Lara Croft desperately scrambles backwards across the floor with her elbows; aiming for an exit that isn't there. In a heartbeat he is on her, the arc of his killing stroke barely deflected by a windmilling of limbs. With eyes as large as saucers, he starts reassuring her with shushing noises.


A quicktime opportunity. A fumbled input. Steel punches into Lara's chest. His shushes, once urgent, fade with the strength of her twitches. The colour drains completely from Lara's face and her sightless eyes are closed with a practiced sweep of his hand. Wrenching the blade free, the raggedy man turns without a backward glance and heads off to find some more "survivors".

When we heard studio lead Darrell Gallagher tell the world to "forget everything you know about *Tomb Raider*" we fobbed his words off as pure marketing spin. However, if the savagery and sheer intensity of these early reveals are anything to go by, *Tomb Raider* will offer an origin story that'll warrant a reevaluation of Ms. Croft and a tomb unlike any other raided before.

After 15 years and 10 iterations there's little doubt that Lara Croft was in need of a makeover. But where most concept artists would have applied thicker mascara, blush and cleavage deeper than most Brazilian mines; Crystal Dynamics has slapped on mud, blood and sensible travel clothes.

The original Lara's busty, impossibly hourglass figure has been deemed behind with the times and her new measurements now exist within the realms of reality. We, for one, applaud the move. As a lure designed to reel in media attention and throngs of horny teenagers towards gaming, the mid-'90s Lara served her purpose. Nowadays, such character design belongs in a museum.

But we're wasting time on surfaces here. Easily the most important tweak in this tomb raider's template is her utter lack of worldly experience and, as a consequence, an innate vulnerability. Up until this point in the franchise, this gutsy grave robber has essentially been a version of James Bond crossbred with Indiana Jones. Tough, capable and unafraid to run headlong into traps or blast henchman and heritage-listed wildlife. The classic Croft oozed a super-human confidence and brashness. All



“Tomb Raider will offer an origin story that’ll warrant a reevaluation of Ms. Croft”

raider

other *Tomb Raider* games have armed her with impressive abilities and faculties, typically she’s always at the apex of her powers. Those days have passed into antiquity.

As an inexperienced 21-year-old, the new Lara Croft finds herself on a research vessel that wrecks on a mysterious island off the coast of Japan. The island seems eerily deserted to begin with, but it soon becomes obvious that the place is a mysterious magnet for plane and shipwrecks, plus its indigenous population is comprised of nutters. Seriously injured, Lara must overcome the challenges of a harsh and unforgiving trek across a vast wilderness and into the claustrophobic caverns that honeycomb the island. All the while she will be watched by lethal predators that stalk her every move.

Crystal Dynamics insists this modernisation will not be changing the pillars of the character. Its aim is to make her culturally relevant again, citing Christian Bale’s *Batman* and Daniel Craig’s *Bond* as inspiration for their design direction. Lara’s newfound edginess is going to earn the game an adult rating, but it doesn’t seem to be an attempt to throw in wanton gore for the sake of it; rather it’s a necessary byproduct of telling a truer, psychological tale of survival. And, for

the record, the team see 10 hours playtime as the minimum benchmark for such a tale, though they’re aiming for a longer duration than that. Time will have to tell on that one.

The team have also stated that, from a character progression perspective, Lara may begin as a young, naïve, ‘just-out-of-school’ archaeologist but through several survival situations she’ll sink that proverbial glass of cement. As that metamorphosis is occurring, we’re promised to be treated to the sort of memorable, iconic moments long-time fans have come to expect from the her.

Acrobatics-wise, the character is still quite physical and athletic by nature and she’ll be no slouch in escaping from environmental predicaments. We’re told that Lara can scramble up vertical cliff walls, sprint and leap across huge chasms and even steer in mid-air to land a misdirected jump.

A lot of your traversal abilities will rely on tools and other items Lara can salvage from wreckage and flotsam. These include climbing axes, rope and machetes that can be used to unlock new paths and combat options.

The actual process of attacking others and defending yourself is still a bit of a mystery, but ►

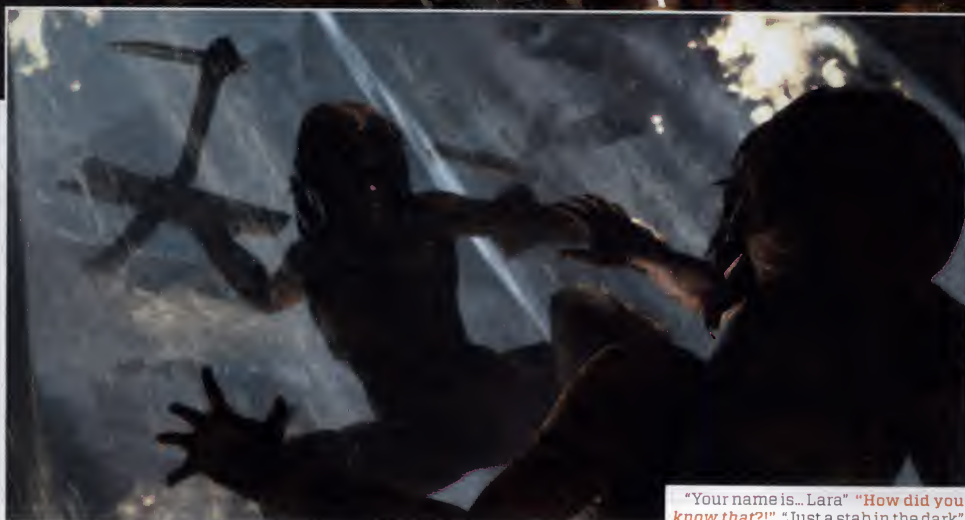
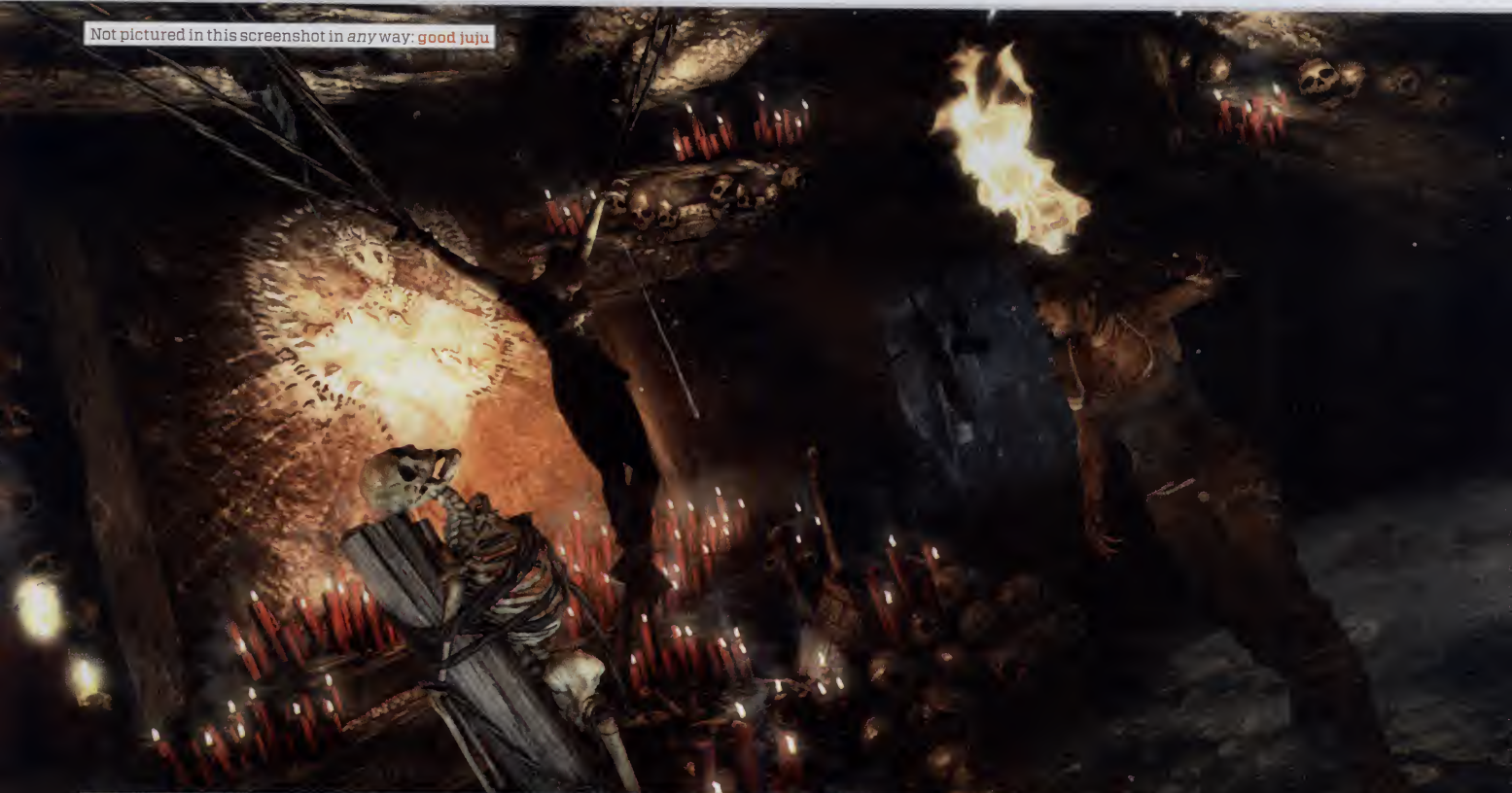
The Pitch

The opportunity to watch a true gaming legend earn her wings. *Uncharted* influences aplenty.

Info

FORMAT: PS3
GENRE: ACTION
RELEASE: TBA
DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
PLAYERS: 1
RRP: TBA

Not pictured in this screenshot in any way: good juju



"Your name is... Lara" "How did you know that?!" "Just a stab in the dark"



[Lara to camera] "Oh, niiice
dismount there, jerkface"

First blood

When it comes to combat, Crystal Dynamics' studio head, Darrell Gallagher, says they'll be moving away from the old lock-on system.

"We've been putting a huge amount of effort into the combat, a much larger emphasis than we've put into any of our previous titles". The team are hoping that their mysterious new free-aim system will help to make *Tomb Raider* stand out from the crowd.

The actual killing of an enemy will be an interesting proposition too, given this new Lara's unfamiliarity with violence; let alone murder.

According to Gallagher: "it's pretty traumatic to [kill] for the first time, irrespective of the reasons why you're forced to. That isn't taken lightly in the game at all. That is a defining moment for the character."

we've been informed that a visceral one-on-one melee system is being put in place. You can also gain advantage over your foes by finding an array of different ranged weapons including a variety of guns, and the hunter's ultimate weapon, the bow. And no, there's zero word yet as to the presence of Lara's iconic dual pistols.

The act of puzzle-solving is to be intrinsically linked to the survival aspect of the game. All problems will be integrated so that every puzzle will feel natural and realistic, as opposed to "find the unlikely key to trigger an elaborate mousetrap series of gears and other suspiciously convenient machines". The majority of head-scratching moments in this adventure – referred to by the team as "survival escapes" – will be solved using the organic options provided by the engine's impressive physics system.

The *Legend Engine* has been overhauled to support puzzle solutions that revolve around buoyant objects, counterweight systems, water and fire. Given that the Island has long been host to humans, there are also existing structures in place that have been erected for a reason, but can just as easily be misused for your escape

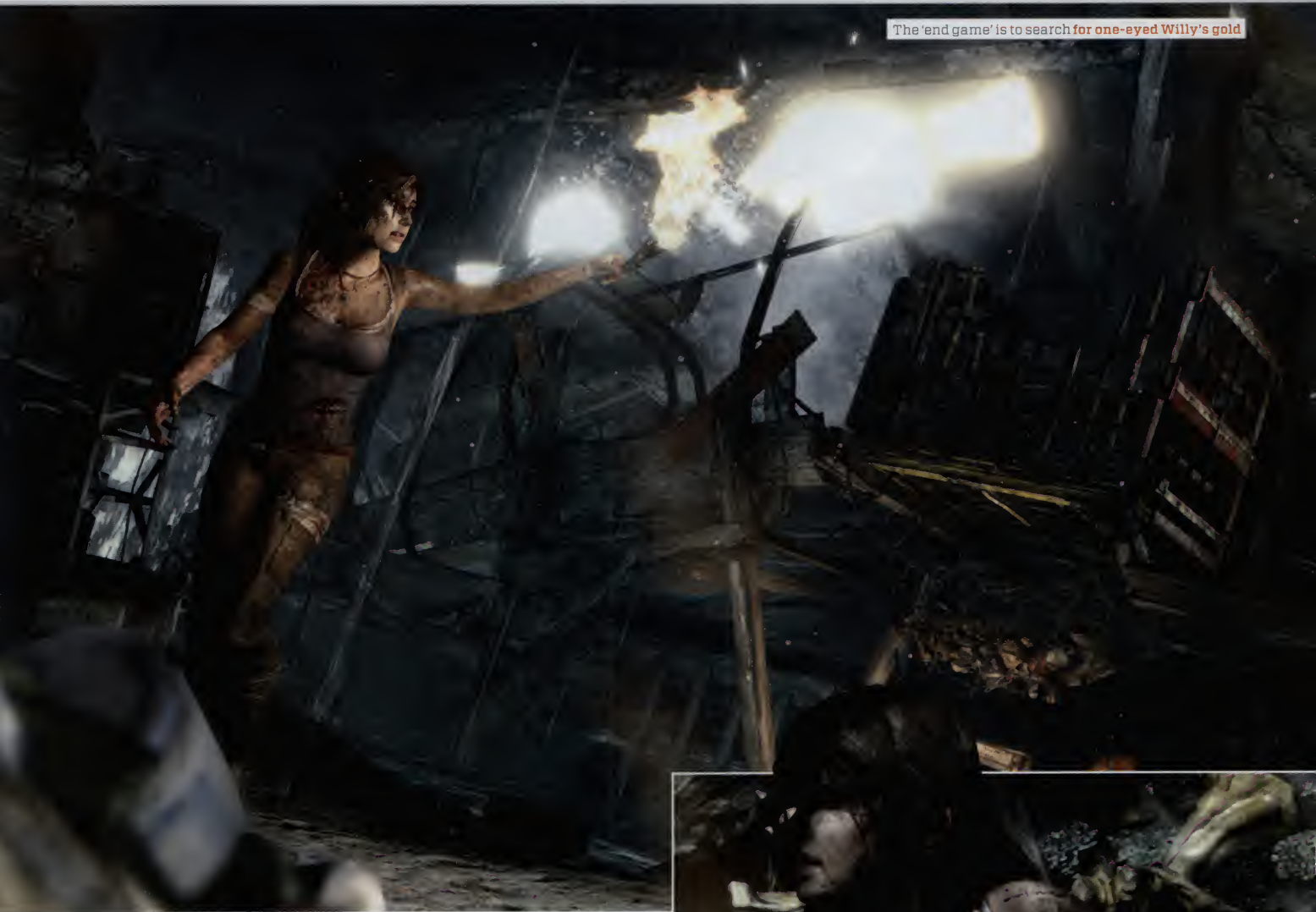
attempts. On paper, the divergence of using variable, physics-based puzzles may seem off-key with 'classic, convoluted tomb raiding'. That said, Crystal Dynamics explains its vision with a scene from *Raiders of the Lost Ark* where Indy's exit solution isn't a jeweled key – he just kicks a giant statue through a wall. Simple. Effective. Satisfyingly rad.

The island you're on is a larger, more 'open' environment and, in many ways, is a character in itself. Despite what you may have heard elsewhere, this island offers you the freedom to explore, but don't go in expecting *Tomb Raider* to be fully open-world.

What you can count on is that all of the natural elements in this mini-world, such as water, rain, fire and mud will offer gameplay purpose. Weather also plays a huge role in things, with the animators and programmers at Crystal Dynamics working hard on ensuring that the elements adversely affect Lara's actions. The team is still evasive as to how this dynamic will evolve across the distinct regions of the island, but they reiterate that weather is a "big, big thing for us."

If Lara is a bit under the weather herself, physically, it will limit your ability to execute certain actions. She's no longer the invincible heroine who can fall a dozen metres and just stretch it off; her new character model will show realistic injuries, and she'll also react emotionally to the pain you've put her in. Any guilt you may

The 'end game' is to search for one-eyed Willy's gold



“ [Lara Croft] is no longer the invincible heroine who can **fall a dozen metres and just stretch it off** ”

feel from this can be assuaged by picking up health, water and other supplies to help Lara to get back on her feet quicker. However, some of the spills are unavoidable and inherited from non-interactive cutscenes. These injuries are in place to darken the tone of the story, and are also used to systemically keep you from exploring beyond your means.

Tomb Raider is still a long way off and though it may sound like 'Psycho Island Survivor' at this point, it's clear that Crystal Dynamics still has the cornerstone concepts covered. We haven't been privy to them, but the team assured us that, yes, there will be actual tombs to raid. Sure, Lara might have a bumpy ride getting to said mausoleums – and perhaps make a speedy exit from them – but they will be very much apparent.

It's obvious that the team at Crystal Dynamics haven't entered into this dark reboot lightly. They've not only had the guts to step back and re-evaluate one of gaming's most iconic characters, they've also gestated their proprietary engine into looking amazing. *Tomb Raider* is a complete do-over – the original games, the movies, all of it. A total restart.

Like most precious objects out of reach, a lot of *Tomb Raider* is shrouded by a tantalizing veil of mystery. The clues we've been given about its nature have put a sparkle of greed in our eye. We want to acquire this like the golden fleece.

Adam Mathew

They Say

"*Tomb Raider* will rebuild Lara Croft into a culturally relevant hero worthy of the attention that once came so effortlessly"

We Say

Crystal Dynamics is well on the way to achieving that goal. It's always great to see more positive female role models in gaming. We just hope the gameplay is there to back it all up.

Verdict

BAD SHAPE
NEEDS WORK
GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD
GREAT STUFF

SURE-THING



Lara with breasts smaller than her head: never thought we'd see the day

True hipsters **don't even try to aim.** Just to be ironic

True Crime: Hong Kong

You have the right to remain dead

The Pitch

Stranglehold meets *San Andreas*, and with a gooey moral-centre

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE:

DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

DEVELOPER: UNITED FRONT

GAMES

PLAYERS: 1-TBC

United Front Games is whipping up an extremely gritty open-world game, but it's mindful of marrying that with a *San Andreas* sense of mischief and mayhem too.

Our first clue of this was when asking about the available side-missions, we were told "karaoke, human bowling and cockfighting". The second clue came when we asked if said cockfighting "would be too visceral to be shown onscreen", the question became misinterpreted as something else completely.

Good times.

The wanton thrashing of cocks may sound like a distressing hobby that's out of place in most Western cities, but this is Hong Kong and a bit of fowl-play in a side alley is the very least of your concerns. As detective Wei Shen, a special agent sent undercover to infiltrate and bring down the Triads, you'll find that you your hands will be full with other things: mostly guns, other times with meat cleavers.

With orders to "do whatever it takes to become one of them," paranoia will plague Wei as he struggles to find balance between his duty as a cop, and how far he's really willing to go to prove his loyalty and maintain newly formed Triad alliances. Can he really commit crimes including extortion, running drugs, smuggling weapons, shaking down informants, human trafficking and sometimes even murder? If you've seen *Infernal Affairs* or *The Departed*, you already know the score.

As Wei continues to get props from his scumbag homies, you'll need to be mindful that every action you do will affect his "Face", the game's reputation system.

It's not just about being above the law, it's a goddamned popularity contest with these underworld types. Having slicker threads, hotter rides and conducting your hand-to-hand combat with Jet Li finesse will earn your respect and unlock upgrades, and more side missions/jobs. Nice work there, show-off.



Even at this early stage it looks as though UFG has created quite an impressive playground with Hong Kong. They've captured the eclectic mix of architecture, bustling night markets, labyrinthine alleys and the overall sense of being at large in a lush, neon nightmare. The game world itself is reported to be quite large, and it's jam packed with over 500 things to do.

Some of these activities are of a more light-hearted nature, like the aforementioned 'Hyper Chicken Street Fighting'. These include: gambling, safe cracking and fight clubs (which we probably shouldn't be talking about). But there are also side-missions that expand the main plot a bit, such as undertaking police cases, Triad jobs and doing other morally ambiguous favours for people. We're told that each of these antics will be linked to an online social network in an effort to encourage score wars, but there's no word yet on fully-fledged multiplayer.

Even without confirmed online shenanigans, *True Crime: Hong Kong* is still set to please thanks to its dedication to high-speed chases, it's freestyle combat system and a free-run (read: parkour) system that will create action-movie moments that are not typically seen in most open-world titles.

UFG inform us that guns will be around, but getting one – usually by doing a disarm



Wei's 88mph sidekick will **send your future kids** back to 1955

"My car has HK license plates just to remind y'all what city we're in"

"It's not just about being above the law, it's a goddamned popularity contest with these underground types"

Ironically, the inbuilt airbags are making 'safety-boy' burn faster

"Do you expect me to talk?" "No, Mr Shen, I expect you to cry like a sissy"

This guy just lost Face, like, a whole face's worth of Face

move that looks painful enough to make the victim pee out of their own mouth – will feel more like a power-up.

The team's focus has shifted much more towards having a deep hand-to-hand martial arts combat system that features multiple combinations of strikes, grapples, environmental attacks, short ranged melee weapon duels (knives, batons, what have you) and finishing moves. The latter are particularly satisfying; taking the time to kick somebody into a generator or to drown them in a nearby fishtank is always well worth the effort.

Free-running is a concept that may seem very reminiscent of *Assassin's Creed*, but it is actually inspired by the hours and hours of cop chases scenes the UFG team have no doubt been watching. Hong Kong at street level is packed to the gills with a seething mass of humanity and free-running will focus heavily on ground level interaction with debris, people, vehicles, walls, and breachable objects. UFG, all we ask for are shootable melon stands and knock-over-able old ladies with shopping bags.

If the thought of pelting pell-mell through the populace isn't your thing, you can always rip off a car and get your chase on that way. Along with an intuitive lock-on based shooting mode, you can also pull up alongside your prey and execute daring stunt based actions between cars, bikes and boats.

Given that UFG employs a few ex-*Need for Speed* staffers, you can expect to thunder around this sandbox in the sort of action-oriented driving experience that's typically only found in linear driving games.

Thanks to an unexplained delay we've all been made to wait a little bit longer for *True Crime: Hong Kong*. While we see such delay as a true crime in and of itself, it certainly seems as though UFG is making good use of the extra development time.

The sordid tale of special agent Wei Shen has captured our imagination like a spinning wrist-lock and Hong Kong will be an intoxicating place to visit. We look forward to losing ourselves and (most of) our morality in its twisted neon innards. **Adam Mathew**

They Say

"The undercover cop angle provides *TC: HK* with a moral centre and an original thematic take on the open-world genre. For Wei, it's not black or white, but many shades of grey"

We Say

How original it will end up being will rest squarely on how much 'good cop' is still left in Wei Shen.

Verdict

BAD SHAPE
NEEDS WORK
GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD
GREAT STUFF
SURE-THING



The Pitch

As an up and coming mutant you must choose which faction to ally yourself with as you come to terms with your powers and where you fit in the scheme of things.

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

EXPECTED RELEASE:
LATE 2011

DISTRIBUTOR:
ACTIVISION

DEVELOPER: SILICON
KNIGHTS

PLAYERS: 1

Apologies for being brutal and frank but let's just say that most X-Men games erupt in a spectacular crapfest that overshadows each previous version in scale, scope and... well, crap. Harsh truths, but fair, bar the excellent *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance*. So is this destined for landfill? Perhaps not, as it seems.

We've got a couple of reasons to put our shovel down. First, there's no movie attached to it so the developer can actually concentrate on making a good game rather than pumping out drivel against the clock. Secondly, acclaimed comic book author Mike Carey (*Sandman*, *Hellblazer*, *X-Men: Legacy*) is taking the reins to ensure that nobody's losing the plot.

If that isn't enough to allay your fears, you're playing as one of three mutants with newly manifested powers as opposed to an established

character. This means it's a blank creative slate for those industrious chaps and chapettes over at Silicon Knights. As your mutated puberty kicks into high gear you'll need to gain mastery over your abilities and pick a side.

Are you pro-human? Whiling away the hours rescuing kitties, helping little old ladies and hitting up the Synagogue on Saturday? Or are you bad to the bone, cashing a cheque on Magneto's payroll, living by the credo "Mutate or die!" The real fun will be working out where you stand and sticking to it.

Silicon Knights' history with the 10-years-in-the-making flop *Too Human* is concerning but, with some RPG elements hinted and a fresh new look, *X-Men: Destiny* has us cautiously optimistic. Just please give us the chance to wear claws on our hands. **Dave Kozicki**

They Say

"You're playing a young mutant, who's just come into their powers, but you're not yourself an X-Man. You're still earning your stripes, kind of thing. It's a cool and unique approach to an X-Men game."

We Say

We've been burnt so many times before, but branching storylines, playing it both ways and tough decisions is a wise move.

Verdict

BAD SHAPE
NEEDS WORK

GOT POTENTIAL

LOOKING GOOD
GREAT STUFF
SURE-THING

Yoostar2 In The Movies

Just hope Margaret and David don't have to rate your Blues Brother impersonations

The Pitch

A 'movie karaoke' game where you need to play the role of the character in the scene.

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: PARTY

EXPECTED RELEASE: TBA
2011

DISTRIBUTOR: AIE

DEVELOPER: YOOSTAR

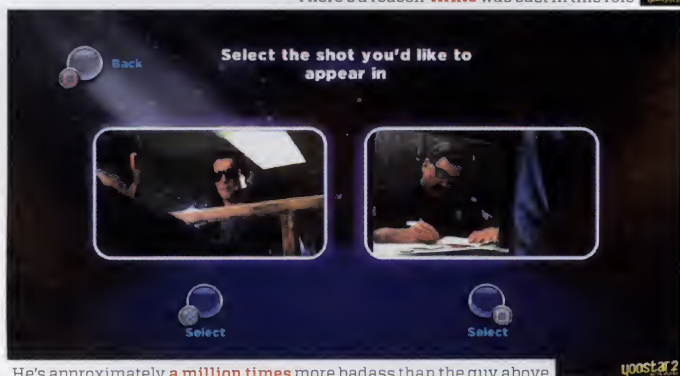
PLAYERS: 1-TBA

It's clear the *OPS* staffers weren't born to act. While most of us are rabid movie buffs, our knowledge of iconic and entertaining movies is probably best left to nailing trivia quiz nights.

We learned this when we sat down with Yoostar2. The premise is simple: set up your PlayStation Eye camera, pick a scene of a movie



There's a reason **Arnold** was cast in this role



He's approximately a million times more badass than the guy above

or TV show from the pretty wide selection on offer, and attempt to re-create the scene playing one of the characters in your lounge room.

The tech's impressive, as the Eye takes a photo of you and your background, then through technical voodoo erases your background and puts you in the scene. Every movement you make as the character then happens in the movie or TV show.

Everything else that's in the scene still happens around you. If there's another character in it they'll say their lines, so the game element occurs as you have to time your lines correctly. We didn't, but through no fault of the software.

Your lines are displayed on screen and a karaoke-esque line trails across the screen, telling you roughly when each word has to be uttered. Plus, would you choose a scene you hadn't watched before?

Our first choice was *Kindergarten Cop*, in the bit where Arnold sits down and tries to convince his flock he doesn't have a tumor. While you're in it you feel fine as you gracefully recite the lines, but the real amusement – and, let's face it, horror – comes at the end when your performance is replayed to show you up as the (probably) awful hack you really are.

A scene from *Mad Men* also showed us that we clearly don't know how to place our arms when the camera's pointed our way. We liked what we saw, and want to play more. Move over *SingStar*: this could be the PlayStation's next big party game. **Paul Taylor**

They Say

"Yoostar2 allows players to perform in hundreds of famous movie scenes, record their performances, and share them with friends and family online."

We Say

What, this is going to go online? You can expect to see hundreds of really good performances, but the really good stuff will come from people ad-libbing.

Verdict

BAD SHAPE
NEEDS WORK

GOT POTENTIAL

LOOKING GOOD
GREAT STUFF
SURE-THING



THE 100 GREATEST PLAYSTATION GAMES EVER AS VOTED BY YOU!

Responses to our special countdown in issue #50 came thick and fast. The results are in, amigos. Here are Australia's most-loved PlayStation games. Did your all-time fave make the cut? Read on!



100 ► The Warriors (2005) PS2

We still maintain that this is the most faithful movie adaptation gaming has ever seen. Dripping with style and bursting with coolness, it makes you wonder why other movie tie-ins still suck even five years later.

99 ► Dino Crisis (1999) PSone

"A unique mix of survival horror and dinosaurs, a truly frightening game on par with the original *Resident Evil*. The series fell apart after the second game, but I think it's time Capcom revived the series." **Blake Harrod**

98 ► FIFA 11 (2010) PS3

Just scraping in at the tail end of the top 100 is the most successful sports game ever made. It's well-deserved of this commercial kudos too, because it's also the best sports game ever made.

97 ► Super Street Fighter IV (2010) PS3

Surprisingly low for one of the greatest fighting games ever crafted, but with all our attention now diverted to Haggar in *Marvel vs Capcom 3* we'll let it slide.

96 ► Skate 2 (2009) PS3

"You guys were right: there's nothing especially wrong with *Skate 3* but something about *Skate 2*'s awesome city full of rad drops just keeps me coming back to it. A game you can lose hours to in no time." **Ben Magee**



95 ► Wipeout HD (2008) PSN

That was close. Paul's still quivering in mild shock that *Wipeout 2097* failed to make the top 100, but at least one title from the enduring futuristic racing series squeezed itself in.

94 ► Duke Nukem: Time to Kill (1998) PSone

We've got fond memories of this too – headbanging to Stabbing Westward and mowing down pigcops. "DUKE NUKEM KICKS ASS!" **Tony Barton**

93 ► V8 Supercars 3 (2006) PS2

"V8 Supercars 3 was the best driving simulator to include Australian cars and race tracks. I have no idea why there still hasn't been a V8 Supercars 4 for the PlayStation 3." **Edmond Sherifi**



92 ► Hitman: Blood Money (2006) PS2

"One of the few games I can play and ENJOY without nostalgia goggles. The cold and precise atmosphere, the endlessly replayable missions." **Neonic9**

91 ► Shadow of the Colossus (2006) PS2

"Every self-respecting gamer should have played this, otherwise they just aren't getting the full PlayStation experience!" **Farc86**



90 ► MediEvil (1998) PSone

We always thought this brilliant old hack 'n slash was hugely underrated by gamers at large, but it turns out enough of our readers love this fun classic enough to boost it into their top 100. Awesome!

89 ► The Orange Box (2007) PS3

This feels a little low to us, but it's your list. Good to see it made it nonetheless. If you haven't played *Portal* – worth the price of admission – you're missing out on one of most-inspired games ever created.

88 ► Silent Hill (1999) PSone

"*Silent Hill* proved to be the scariest game to have ever existed at that time. The graphics, atmosphere and story of *Silent Hill* was one of the best for the PSone." **Edmond Sherifi**

87 ► Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (2000) PSone

No surprises here. Due to universal acclaim the virtually perfect *THPS2* (with *GTAIV*) was the equal highest rated game of the decade from its release until 2010.



86 ► Grand Theft Auto (1997) PSone

Who knew what this quirky, top-down cartoon crime spree would begin? Not us. This old PlayStation classic still has the capacity to charm and entertain, despite its low-tech look. Gourangal!

85 ► God of War: Ghost of Sparta (2010) PSP

Easily the best demonstration of just how top notch a PSP action-adventure can be. The series loses none of its mega-grandeur during its time on the small screen.

84 ► Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time (2009) PS3

Certainly the best *Ratchet & Clank* title we've ever played, although coming in below nearly all of the others here. You buggers are crazy!

83 ► Devil May Cry (2001) PS2

Games of this type have gone a little stale since but there's no denying the fact that the original *Devil May Cry* was an innovative and slick actioneer when it hit shelves a decade ago. Clearly many of you agree.

82 ► Grand Theft Auto 2 (1999) PSone

"One of the things I remember about *GTA2* is the opening movie. The game was great, but I wished it was more like that. Then *GTAIII* came out." **Malvin**

81 ► Battlefield: Bad Company 2 (2010) PS3

With so many dedicated fans we're surprised *Bad Company 2* comes in considerably lower than its *Call of Duty* rivals, but it certainly deserves a spot.

80 ► Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker (2010) PSP

There's plenty of love for *Peace Walker* among *OPS* readers. It's to be expected, really – it's a fully-fledged *Metal Gear* title and an amazing PSP exclusive.

79 ► Red Faction (2001) PS2

What a shooter this was! *Red Faction*'s destruction effects were a generation ahead of their time and it remains one of our favourite sci-fi shooters ever. A rollicking ride.

78 ► Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction (2007) PS3

"This is my favourite *Ratchet & Clank* title, easily. Maybe it's because it was the first PS3 game I played, but I still love it." **Trent Marsden**



77 ► Dead Space (2008) PS3

We've received some ribbing that this title missed out on making it into issue #50's Top 50. *Dead Space* is a fantastic game and easily the current king of horror post-*Resident Evil 5*, we agree. It was 51, honest.

76 ► Medal of Honor Frontline (2002) PS2

"*Medal of Honor: Frontline* is still one of the best WWII first-person shooters and was the first shooter I ever played." **Jamesvader**

75 ► Red Faction: Guerrilla (2009) PS3

Again this series pushes the technical envelope with tactical destruction unlike anything we've seen – or have seen since, for that matter.

74 ► Syphon Filter (1999) PSone

"*Syphon Filter* was one of the most engrossing third-person shooters I've ever played. Not only should it be included in the Top 100 but it also should be remade into a PS3 exclusive!" **ghag07**



73 ► Just Cause 2 (2010) PS3

What an absolutely astonishing title. There's more freedom in five minutes of *Just Cause 2* than you get in most other games. Parachutes, jetpacks and a playground of epic proportions.

72 ► Battlefield 1943 (2009) PSN

"*Battlefield 1943*: Awesome DICE action at such a cheap price. I play it more than some of my actual full PS3 games." **Tomekk_PL1**

71 ► Call of Duty: World at War (2008) PS3

"I have finished this game six times and I'm still not bored of it. The graphics are 9/10, weapons are great and the story is BRILLIANT." **Alec Waddell**

70 ► **Need for Speed Underground** (2003) PS2

Ripped off *The Fast and the Furious* so hard it shipped with Vin Diesel's chest hairs stuck to it, but it was a huge hit. The drag racing remains our favourite part.

69 ► **Kingdom Hearts** (2002) PS2

"It had a brilliant story, deep character growth, an innovative combat system, and it was able to base an entire game around the Disney Universe and not make it childish." **liondrive**

68 ► **Final Fantasy VIII** (1999) PS2

It often goes unmentioned due to the aura of its forebear but we didn't expect it'd be neglected by you lot, and it wasn't. After all, it didn't become the fastest-selling FF title ever (until *FFXIII*) by accident.

67 ► **Jak & Daxter: The Precursor Legacy** (2001) PS2

"Naughty Dog did what I thought would never be possible; it developed a platform game that was even better than *Crash Bandicoot*." **Leon Harris**

66 ► **BioShock** (2008) PS3

Finding *BioShock* in the lower half of the countdown was a mild surprise considering its widespread acclaim, but it did take some time to make its way to PS3. Perhaps a few more of you need to check it out.

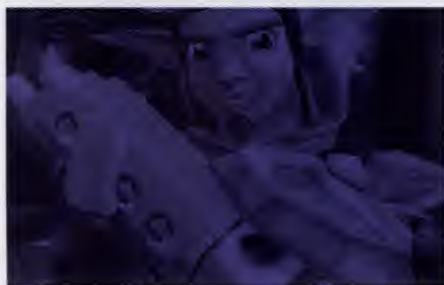


65 ► **Need for Speed Hot Pursuit** (2010) PS3

We would've been appalled if this hadn't made your list – it's the highest rated *Need for Speed* title ever. This is arcade racing at its near-finest.

64 ► **Killzone** (2004) PS2

The original *Killzone* didn't quite meet the expectations many had set for it but that doesn't seem to have dampened your fondness for it. It certainly remains the king of cool reload animations.



63 ► **Jak II: Renegade** (2003) PS2

A remarkable next step for the fledgling franchise, *Jak II* took the platforming and exploration of the original and merged it with a large open-world. It was *Jak & Daxter* meets *GTA* before everybody else was doing it.

62 ► **Driver** (1999) PSone

"Playing this game was a religious experience. It was like somebody had snuck into my thoughts and built me my dream videogame. Muscle cars, powerslides, '70s San Francisco? It still gives me a partial." **Clint Kilmister**

61 ► **Crash Team Racing** (1999) PSone

Aside from *ModNation Racers*, in the last 10 years has anybody developed a kart racing game equal to or better than *CTR*? We say no.



60 ► **Borderlands** (2009) PS3

A fantastic game and a surprise retail success, Gearbox's "role-playing shooter" – a term Gearbox coined itself – has cemented its place among this generation's finest first-person shooters.

59 ► **The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion** (2007) PS3

"Just lasts forever. I must have spent hundreds of hours on this game. I'm half-scared to pick it up again! Bring on the next version; it's been a few years!" **iceman567**

58 ► **Ratchet & Clank 2: Locked and Loaded** (2003) PS2

"Awesome. The only thing I've never understood was why they changed the name for PAL territories. What's wrong with Going Commando?" **Brett McInnes**

57 ► **Medal of Honor** (2010) PS3

"Me and my dad have played all of the *Medal of Honor* games. I think it deserves to be in the Top 100 because its one of the best war games/shooters and it's very close to a real war scenario." **Alec Waddell**

56 ► **Star Wars: The Force Unleashed** (2008) PS3

"A technical tour de force that showed us exactly how awesome Force powers could be with the right technology. A personal favourite." **Ben Trott**

55 ► **Canis Canem Edit** (2006) PS2

One of the most charming games we've ever played. All the mischief of school wrapped up in a comic adventure full of oddball characters, fun locations, playground brawls and panty raids.

54 ► **Star Wars: Battlefront II** (2005) PS2

"If I could've seen this game as a small boy, watching *Star Wars* on VHS for the first time, I fear my head may have exploded, *Scanners*-style. All the biggest battles from the *Star Wars* series? Sign. Me. Up." **Ben Trott**

53 ► **Jak 3** (2004) PS2

"The greatest of the series, and the greatest platforming adventure game I've ever played. I love *Uncharted* but I wish Naughty Dog would return to the *Jak & Daxter* universe." **Darren Baker**

52 ► **Resident Evil 4** (2005) PS2

Like the original, *Resident Evil 4* was a brilliant game. It was also hugely influential. *Resident Evil 4* redefined third-person action games; the "over the shoulder" viewpoint it introduced has now become standard.

51 ► **Fallout: New Vegas** (2010) PS3

This second trip into the wasteland hasn't resonated with *OPS* readers as loudly as the first, but enough of you have been sucked right back in to vote for it. It comes in just one game shy of the first 50.

50 ► **Ratchet & Clank** (2002) PS2

Ratchet and Clank have gone on to define the platforming genre across the entire PlayStation brand. Their debut appearance in *Ratchet & Clank* marked the beginning of something very special.

49 ► **Resident Evil** (1996) PSone

One of the most important games of the '90s, the original *Resident Evil* was the pathfinder for all survival horror games to follow. The list of games we owe to *Resident Evil* is long (and so scary you'll brown your undies).

48 ► **Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back** (1997) PSone

"It's possibly the main reason why I'm still into gaming and why I got the PS3. To experience those moments of happiness, joy and pure awesomeness." **Chris Southcott**

47 ► **Gran Turismo 5** (2010) PS3

It's no secret some were disappointed in the final product. Unfortunately, no game could meet the colossal expectation awaiting *GT5* but it remains the finest driving sim to date.

46 ► **Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time** (2003) PS2

Like sand in your underpants, you'll never get rid of this game from Best Of lists the world over. Beautiful and clever in equal measure, it's a remarkable adventure.

45 ► **Resistance 2** (2008) PS3

Fans were critical of the changes Insomniac made to the *Resistance* formula for this sequel, and the *Killzone* series has since prevented it from being the PS3's premier sci-fi shooter series, but it's still in the Top 100.

44 ► **Gran Turismo 2** (2000) PSone

"In my opinion *GT2* was the game that established the series, as it was the only one in the series that I remember playing for hours on end for no reason other than to buy cars and spec them out." **Scott Cannan**

43 ► **Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories** (2005) PSP

This was the game that showed us exactly what the PSP could do. A proper, 3D *GTA* game in the palm of your hands? It was pure madness.

42 ► **Final Fantasy X** (2002) PS2

The first in the series with fully three-dimensional backdrops, the first in the series to feature voice acting and the first in the series to later get a direct sequel. *Final Fantasy X* remains a titan of its genre.



41 ► **Tomb Raider** (1996) PSone

"*Tomb Raider* had so many of those moments that just made you stop and say, 'Wow'. Plus, what's not to love about facing a Tyrannosaurus rex in a lost valley?" **running_jester**

40 ► **Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories** (2006) PSP

"Contains the greatest mission in any *GTA* game, ever. Phil Collins needs to be kept alive long enough to belt out the iconic drum fill from 'In The Air Tonight' and it's up to you to make sure that happens. Perfect." **Ben Bates**

39 ► **Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec** (2001) PS2

"Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec is arguably the best game ever on the PS2. Many other developers tried to imitate but could never duplicate." **JasonHickman1985**

38 ► **Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped** (1998) PSone

"This game never gets old. I've defeated it countless times. I got it with my first ever PlayStation and it still sits on my shelf proudly." **Luke Vec**

37 ► **Final Fantasy VII** (1997) PSone

"Need I say more? If you didn't follow the *Final Fantasy* series before it you did after it." **Steven Laban**

"*Final Fantasy VII* consumes 100 hours of my social life every couple of years." **Murray Stevenson**



36 ► **Burnout 3: Takedown** (2004) PS2

Six years on and *Burnout 3: Takedown* is still the best pure arcade racer available. Intriguingly, *Burnout Paradise* didn't make the Top 100.

35 ► **Crash Bandicoot** (1996) PSone

"It was the first video game I ever played. I started playing it when I was three. I only finished it last year when I was 13. That's 10 years of my life I've played just the original *Crash Bandicoot*." **Sam Harris**

34 ► **Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty** (2001) PS2

Even the absence of Snake for most of the game can't stop *MGS2* coming comfortably inside the first half of the countdown. *That's* admirable.

33 ► **Grand Theft Auto: Episodes From Liberty City** (2010) PS3

"Even better than *GTAIV*, every day of the week. The same dense and detailed city with better characters and more content. Win." **Eddie Murphy**

32 ► **Gran Turismo** (1998) PSone

"I voted for *Gran Turismo* because it is the epitome of racing games. It paved the way for all modern driving sims. It didn't just raise the bar, it knocked it over the fence for six and out." **Joshua Musolino**



31 ► **Tekken 3** (1998) PSone

"*Tekken 3* was absolutely awesome. More characters to choose from, more techniques to learn and use, and the chance to put my mates well and truly in their place." **sad_ronin**

30 ► **Ratchet & Clank 3: Up Your Arsenal** (2004) PS2

"This game was legendary to me. It had so much replay value. The plot was amazing, inventive, humorous and witty." **Cyber6x**



29 ► **God of War: Chains of Olympus** (2008) PSP

The highest PSP game on the list *isn't* a GTA title; rather it's Kratos' first portable outing. Still an astonishing game and essential for series die-hards.

28 ► **Assassin's Creed Brotherhood** (2010) PS3

For our money this beats *ACII* hands down, but maybe it just hasn't been out for long enough to sway enough hearts and minds to feel the same.

27 ► **Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee** (1997) PSone

"It's one of the most entertaining and funny games of all time and the lack of mid-level checkpoints made it that little bit harder." **Mitchell Debenham**

26 ► **Gran Turismo 4** (2005) PS2

It's odd to see *GT4* well ahead of *GT5* according to readers, but *GT4* was a true juggernaut of a title that remained completely untouchable in the racing sim sector for years after its release.

25 ►

Call of Duty: Black Ops (2010) PS3

It's only natural a game that established a new record for largest entertainment launch in history would make it this high up the list, although it didn't peak *quite* as high as we'd thought it might.

24 ► **Fallout 3** (2008) PS3

We expected to see this phenomenal RPG perform well in the poll and we haven't been disappointed. We've lost track of the hours we've spent lost in it. "*Fallout 3* stole my life." **hatamahata**

23 ► **Resistance: Fall of Man** (2007) PS3

"It provided a refreshing story about man's survival, it had a highly creative weapon system and it had great online based game modes." **liondrive**

22 ► **Heavy Rain** (2010) PS3

"No it's not a revelation but it's probably one of the most unique and different games to ever hit any gaming console. The story grips you from... about an hour after the beginning until the very end." **Abraham Chalhoub**

21 ► **God of War II** (2007) PS2

No sequel syndrome here; *God of War II* was even bigger, brasher and bloodier than the original. This series has made a massive impact on gaming and deserves all the praise it gets.

20 ► **inFAMOUS** (2009) PS3

"I believe it may be the best original IP for the PS3. I believe it did more new things than *Uncharted* which just perfected an already tried and true formula." **Macula**

19 ► **Killzone 2** (2009) PS2

"I don't care much for sci-fi but I just love this. The fact it shuns colourful lasers for beefy, conventional projectile-based weapons is a big plus but it's the brilliant presentation throughout I love most." **Derek Norris**

18 ► **Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare** (2007) PS3

This game could've been 30 minutes long and shipped with only the incredible flashback sniper level 'All Ghillied Up' and it STILL would made this list.

17 ► **Batman: Arkham Asylum** (2009) PS3

"*Batman: Arkham Asylum* HAD to be part of your Top 50. Surely the article was misprinted. Criminal that it missed out." **noodles211280**

16 ► **God of War** (2005) PS2

Five years ago this game came from nowhere to redefine action-adventure. It's obviously stuck in your minds, because it has stormed to the top of your list.



15 ► **Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater** (2004) PS2

"*Metal Gear Solid 3*! Such a big, awesome game. Just when you thought the series couldn't get better it proved us wrong." **James Rossiter**

14 ► **LittleBigPlanet** (2008) PS3

"I could play this for months on end and not get bored, as long as I had an internet connection. Seriously, some user made levels are amazing." **Chris Southcott**



13 ► **Modern Warfare 2** (2009) PS3

"When a game consumes you, your wife, your son and all your mates everyday and night for a year they must have done something right!" **Tony Barton**

12 ► **Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots** (2008) PS3

"It is truly a phenomenal work of excellence. If you find the word 'Outstanding' in the dictionary you would find *MGS4* there." **Joseph Ung**

11 ► **Assassin's Creed** (2007) PS3

"While I've definitely played better games since, the first *Assassin's Creed* will forever stick in my mind. When I first played it I thought to myself, 'Wow, so THIS is what next gen games can do!'" **Saed Batshon**

Metal Gear Solid (1998)

PSone

It may be the only PSone game to crack the Top 10, but man is it a doozy. The game against which even today's action games are still judged, the original *Metal Gear Solid* remains a stunning example of gaming nirvana.

"*Metal Gear Solid* revolutionised the way games are made." **piZzaman102**

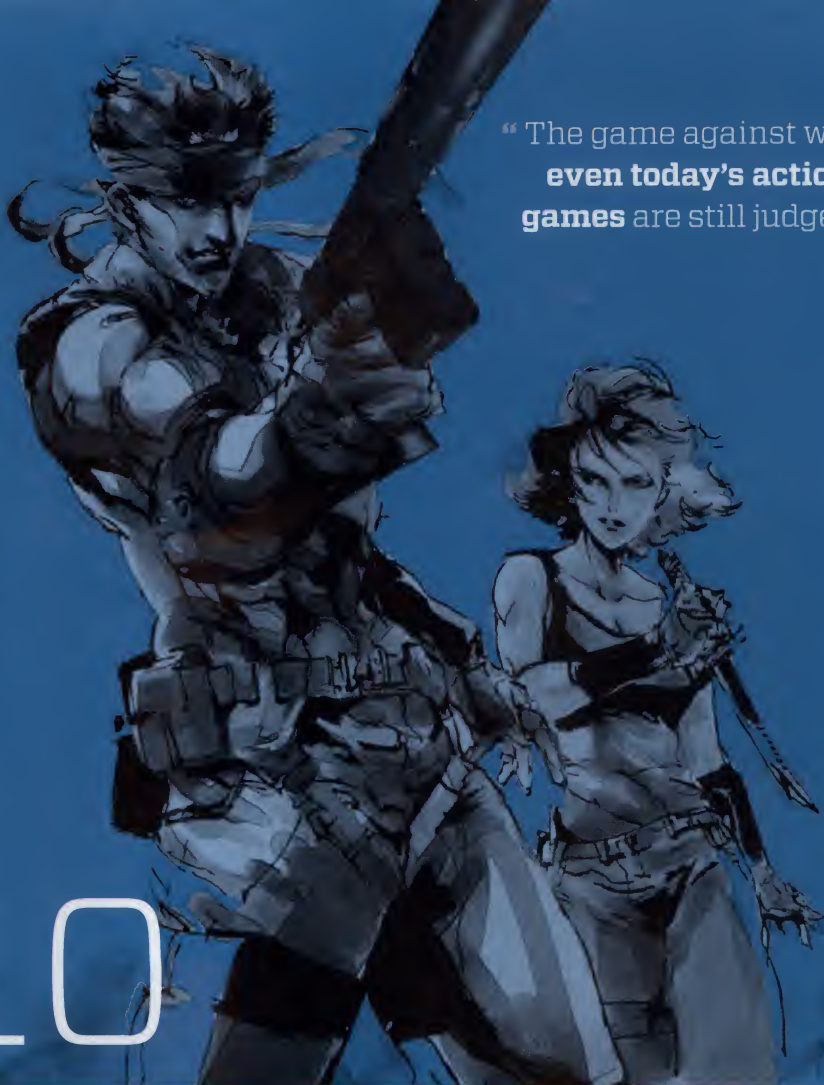
"Where else can you find a game where you spend time trying to find a number to call someone only to find out the back of the box they are talking about is actually the back of the case?" **Al Peck**

"One of the greatest games of all time, it created its own genre." **Tomekk_PL1**

"Revolutionised sneaking games, awesome story and not to mention state of the art graphics (at the time). It was the best." **James Rossiter**

10

"The game against which even today's action games are still judged"



9

"It's hard to believe it's been nearly 10 years since *GTAIII* arrived"

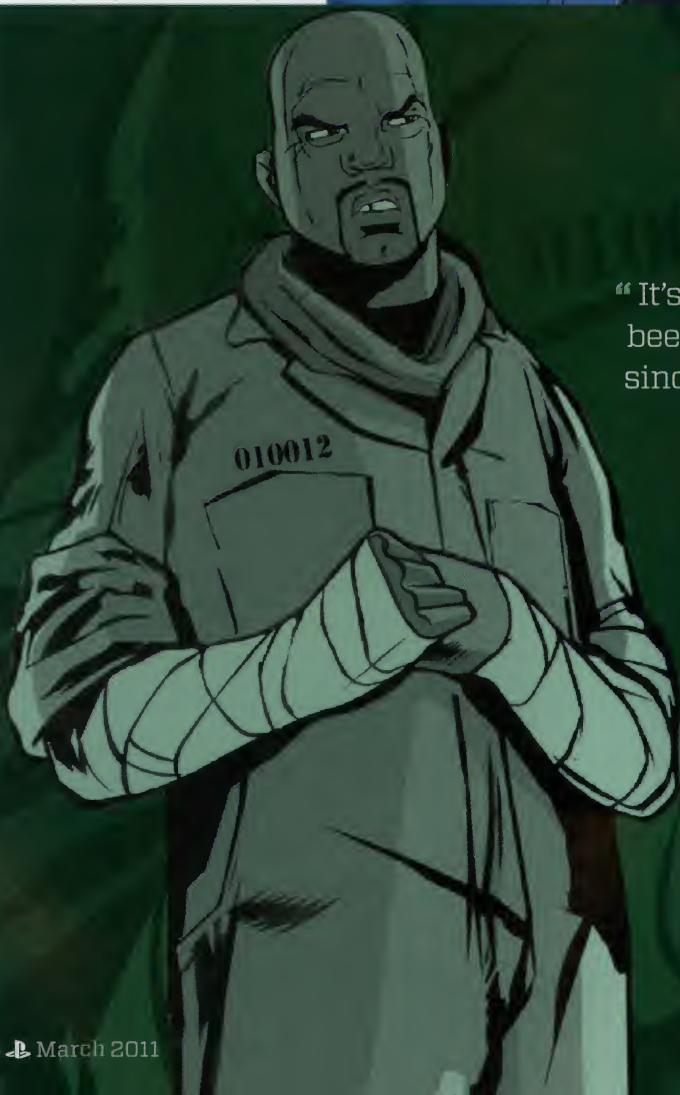
Grand Theft Auto III (2001) PS2

It's hard to believe it's been nearly 10 years since *GTAIII* arrived and turned the gaming world on its head. It's harder still that, even after all the subsequent instalments, *GTAIII* remains in Australia's Top 10 favourite PlayStation games of all time. Now *that* is something.

"10 years old and still infinitely playable. It can't hope to match any of the follow-ups but the hundreds of hours I sunk into this game are unforgettable." **Ben Bates**

"The emotion I remember most when booting up *GTAIII* for the first time is disbelief. This game simply couldn't exist, I told myself. It's too amazing. It's too big." **Eddie Murphy**

"I played this game at a mate's house. Between leaving his place and arriving home I bought a PlayStation 2 and a copy of *GTAIII* for myself. This was before the recall too. Functioning hookers for the win!" **Derek Norris**



8

God of War III (2010) PS3

The ultimate evolution of PlayStation's most epic action-adventure brand, *God of War III* took everything fans loved about the first two, supersized it and released it upon an unsuspecting world like a divine haymaker.

"*God of War III* deserves to be there. It actually made my jaw drop in amazement when I was playing it. Brilliant!" **Andrew Maddock**

"Name me another game where you get to punch Hercules' face off. Name one. You can't, because there is no other game where you can punch off Hercules' face. One more time. Hercules. Face. Off. Case closed. Forever." **Reese Belanger**

"The ultimate evolution of PlayStation's **most epic action-adventure brand**"

7

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune (2007) PS3

With Naughty Dog at the helm we expected *Uncharted* to be great. What we got was something even better. Naughty Dog bottled lightning with this game and the series is now one of the most respected in the industry.

"*Uncharted*, for me, was when I felt the PS3 had really arrived. Here was a game I was acutely aware that I simply could not have played last generation. Here was a game that put most of what Hollywood produces to shame." **Aaron Evry**

"High adventure, a charming lead, a cute-as-hell blonde sidekick and Nazis? *Uncharted* is Indiana Jones for the digital generation." **Alex Denson**

"Naughty Dog bottled lightning with this game"

Assassin's Creed II

(2009) PS3

History managed to come alive (with death) in the Renaissance-themed riot that was *Assassin's Creed II*. Sporting a brand new protagonist and era, this second instalment proved it had the requisite skills to catch up with the original and absolutely murder it.

"What the first game should have been. Epic story and awesome gameplay."

Tomekk_PL1

"Ezio beats Altair any day of the week. Loved the Italian setting." **Mike Stephens**

"Had a much richer world to explore and none of the boring filler quests."

Jay Simmons

"The story is interesting and complex, the gameplay is brilliant and fixed everything bad from the first." **RazZ**

"Exceeds the first game in every way. Great graphics, great music, diverse gameplay and an awesome setting."

Mike186

"After being disappointed by the first game, I was apprehensive about this but seriously everything in *ACII* has been polished and perfected with all the crap cut out from the first title." **Simon Messina**

"The pacing of the story is some of the best I've seen in a video game. It builds great tension leading up to key parts of the plot." **Brian Hess**

"I only wish there was more warning when the game was going to end so I could have slowed down!" **Amy Friend**

6

"This second instalment proved it had **the requisite skills**"



Grand Theft Auto: Vice City(2002)

PS2

GTA titles aren't exactly an endangered species inside the Top 10, and here's another. *GTA: Vice City* was a neon-soaked, coke-fuelled trip to the 1980s that was impossible not to enjoy.

"If I was leaving the planet and only had room on my space ship for one videogame, this would be the one I would take. I can't explain why. *Vice City* has a kind of magic hold over me. In spite of its age I just can't ignore its charm. Rockstar: please set *GTAV* in the '80s so I can take that into space instead of this ancient yet intoxicating classic." **Noah Chenoweth**

"*Vice City* was the *GTA* title I remember most fondly. I remember the day it arrived in the post from New Zealand. I remember struggling to do all the ambulance missions before I even started the main storyline (so I could get infinite stamina). I remember getting a chopper for the first time." **iceman567**

"Bliss. Pure bliss." **Greg Hill**

"You know what I remember? The cheats! Hovercars baby!" **Marko Wooten**

"Get into your first car and 'Billie Jean' starts to play on the radio. It's not an accident, but from that moment I was totally hooked." **Drew Kennedy**



5

"A neon-soaked, coke-fuelled trip to the 1980s that was impossible not to enjoy"



4

Grand Theft Auto IV (2008) PS3

GTA/IV is a game that needs very little introduction. A game that feels as cutting-edge today as it did two years ago is a rare game indeed, and GTA/IV has aged well.

"Greatest game ever." **Mark Alfard**

"How can anybody realistically fault this game?" **Sebastian Harley**


"GTA/IV gets a lot of shit. 'Boring', 'Overrated', 'Too realistic' – I hear this quite often. Personally, I haven't had more fun with a game this generation (*RDR* a close second). The city is filled with hours of detail to immerse yourself in, the story was masterfully executed, and of course there's the euphoria engine. I don't think someone with an non-existent imagination could see the point in playing this after completing the missions, but as I've played this for over 1000 hours I seem to be all right in that area." **Neonic9**

"Do me a favour. Walk around the city. Don't drive – walk. Listen to the sounds of the city. Gawk at the tiny, tiny details: the unique storefronts, the damaged streets. Beyond *Red Dead Redemption* no other game comes close to creating a living, breathing world as well as *GTA/IV* does." **Scott Diefenthaler**

"It's truly spectacular." **Ian Howden**

"Simply the best game I have ever played." **Alan Kowald**

"A game that feels as cutting-edge today as it did two years ago is **a rare game indeed**"



"Not bad for a game
many so-called analysts
predicted would tank"

3

Red Dead Redemption (2010) PS3

Nearly eight million copies later *Red Dead Redemption* has gone from a humble cowpoke to a colossus of Eastwood-esque proportions. Not bad for a game many so-called analysts predicted would tank from the get-go.

"It was a game I waited for since first flagged in *OPS* magazine. All of my expectations were not disappointed when I purchased the game on release day and shoved it into my PS3. A beautifully detailed open world adventure full of choice including the freedom to be a good or bad cowboy was just awesome." **Steve Robins**

"*Red Dead Redemption*: The West has never looked so good." **Steveatron**

"Impossible to sum up how brilliant this game in words. It's *GTA* gone Western, plus more. Just wow."
WATTAHEAD_025

"*Red Dead Redemption* is still the best PS3 game I have played. It changed open world games for me and I loved everything about it." **HarleyDaFrog**

"I remain stunned at the production values on display here." **Grant Wood**

"When I read your review, which said *Red Dead Redemption* is every bit as defining a Western as the top films and books of the genre, I didn't believe it. Then I played it and was transported to another world in a way not even the greatest Westerns have ever managed. What a remarkable experience." **Brett O'Byrne**

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (2004) PS2

We sensed that *GTA: San Andreas* would probably pip *GTA IV* as a sentimental favourite. We thought it might even hit number one. In the end it was beaten to the top spot, but not by a huge margin. Over 50 per cent of readers who left votes left a vote for Rockstar's PS2 classic – a game of such rare quality other developers are still struggling to match it a full console generation later.

"It had everything. What couldn't you do in it? Everything you could want in a sandbox game." **hatamahata**

"There aren't many videogames out there that gave me as much sheer enjoyment as *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*. With its engaging storyline, characters and addictive gameplay it's so hard to stop playing this game, even to this day." **wildy01**

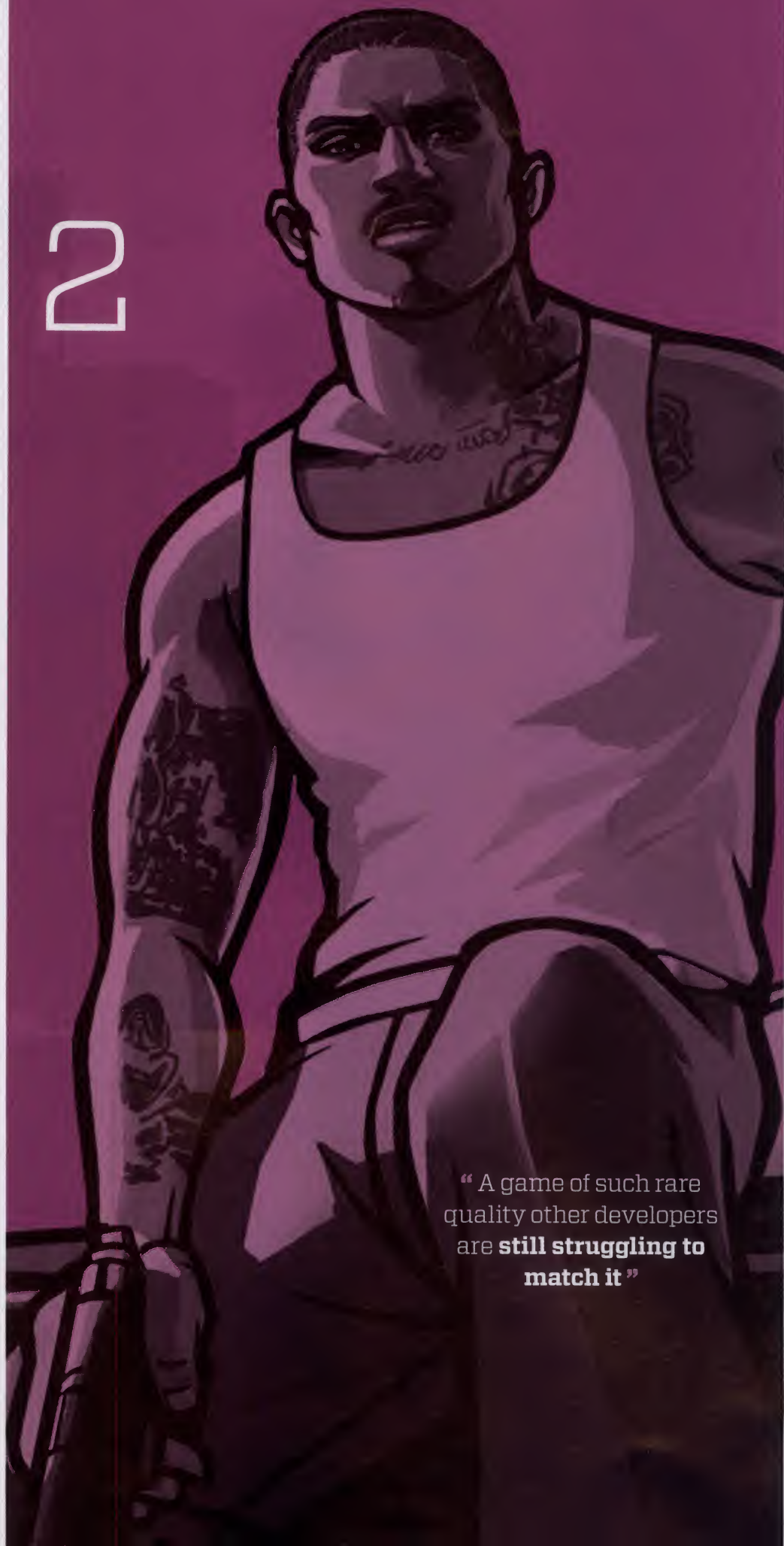
"I didn't have a PS2, but made sure I got the first batch of PS3's so I could play it. Nothing beats jetpacks!"
Chris Southcott

"*Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* – do what you want when you want."
Luke Vec

"*GTA: San Andreas* deserves a place because it is the biggest *GTA* ever made." **xAbsoluteLemonx**

"A truly defining piece of software. No game has ever matched the sheer scope of *GTA: San Andreas*. There's no end to the fun you could have." **Nick Bailey**

2



"A game of such rare quality other developers are **still struggling to match it**"

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves (2009) PS3

It's fantastic to see that *our* favourite PlayStation game of all time is also *your* favourite. As the most critically acclaimed game of 2009 it's not surprising to see *Uncharted 2* take top spot. Over 60 per cent of readers who voted made sure to spare a vote for it!

"As soon as I read 'OPS Top 100 Playstation Games', *Uncharted 2* popped into my head for the number one position. There is no other game that makes you feel like you're playing a blockbuster movie! With its engaging story and memorable characters, this game will be remembered as a winner for along time. Or at least until *Uncharted 3* is released." **wildy01**

"I've never played a game that comes close to this." **Sam Harris**

"I love *Uncharted 2*; it's the best game invented by man!" **Lexie Taylor**

"*Uncharted 2* is a Hollywood blockbuster come to life on the PS3 – epic." **piZzaman102**

"Great action, great plot, great graphics, great multiplayer, great EVERYTHING." **Joshua Musolino**

"It was game of the year. It should definitely be in there." **Nicholas Regnault**

"Possibly the only game that my wife likes and even plays herself. It's basically a movie where you play the leading part." **Mark Smith**

"Over **60 per cent of readers** who voted made sure to spare a vote for it"





SNOW COUNTRY FOR COLD MEN

SSX is more than just a snowboarding sports game. It's a racer, a show-pony of extreme aerial tricks and, in a reboot that's more slick than grit, a survival action game

Words: Paul Taylor

Todd Batty, Creative Director of *SSX: Deadly Descents* at EA Sports, is enthusiastically waxing on about his vision. The series has been absent from the PlayStation roster for the last five years – that's a *Gran Turismo*-length absence, and near enough to a lifetime stretch in videogame years – and the team has grand plans on how they're going to reboot the franchise.

"We wanted to build a game that delivered a blockbuster amount of gameplay content," says Batty. "You look at games today, and we wanted to make a game that could compete at the top echelon of this industry; games like *Red Dead Redemption*, *Call of Duty*, *Grand Theft Auto*, by their sheer size alone have so much replayability and inherent value and content built into the game. We definitely wanted to do that."

They've set themselves a big task. Just how much can you do where the objective is to just follow gravity from the top of a mountain down to the bottom? *SSX* is going to infuse more action adventure elements into the sport of snowboarding.

RULE OF THIRDS

This is a project that's much more than a bunch of ideas about what would be cool, and it's easy to throw a bunch of stuff into

a game and make it 'big'. While the new *SSX* has a much more adult visual style and is made in a time where reboot means darker, harder and more serious, their plan isn't to make a simulation of snowboarding. Batty's quick to tell us "this isn't going to be *Skate* on snow."

Batty and his team at EA Sports acknowledged the problems of making a sequel, and not just their own production but iterations of all games.

"We apply a rule of thirds with sequels," says Batty. "Take all the content, [and compared to the previous game] you keep a third of it the same, improve a third of it, then make a third of it new." It's a raw admission. However, if you make everything new there's nothing for fans to feel connected to. Keep it the same as the last game and you've shown you have no creativity. Improving it means tweaking parts that were either rough or downright awful.

SSX was always a racing game, so that's the third that's going to stay the same – the team promises you'll be racing a lot in *SSX*. In terms of one third improved, Batty wanted to make the trick system based on physics rather than just pressing buttons to trigger an animation. All surfaces can be ridden on, and the angle of the surface and the speed you're



"WE LEFT MOUNTAIN MAN
TO SEE IF IT COULD FIND
US OUR PERFECT RUN.
IT FOUND 4.3 MILLION
OF THEM"



SSX HISTORY



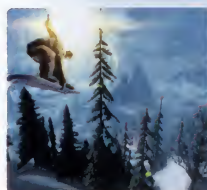
SSX 2000

One of the original launch titles for the PlayStation 2, SSX shipped with eight hugely imaginative tracks. Lauded at the time for its originality and sheer fun.



SSX TRICKY 2001

Called SSX 1.5 by some, this featured the same eight tracks from SSX and two new ones. 'Uber moves' were the biggest addition to gameplay.



SSX 3 2003

Critically acclaimed, the biggest change was a move away from self-contained tracks to one big mountain. Easily the pinnacle of the series so far.



SSX ON TOUR 2005

Not as vivacious as the last release, this was still a pearler and featured a stack of alternate routes throughout each of the 13 new tracks.

travelling at will also affect what tricks you can do. "There's still a way to deliver an over the top arcade trick experience, but doing it in a way that's more advanced and more appropriate for the power we have with next gen consoles," explains Batty.

As for the new stuff, that's the action adventure part of *SSX*. You'll always have a snowboard at your feet, but taking a look at the concept art and screenshots on these pages and you can see that the character has pair of ice axes and gnarly-looking body armour. That's the wing suit, something that Batman would admire as it allows you to glide down the mountain and opens up part of the ranges you'll be boarding across.

These are tools that help you combat the 'enemy' in *SSX*: the terrain. Think rock slides, avalanches and treacherous conditions as you try to make it from the start of the level to the end without dying and also defeating the enemy – a condition true to the triple-A titles Batty admires. You're still going to be racing as fast as possible from the start to the finish, and you're still aiming to do as many tricks as you can. Both of these conditions also rely on you making this journey without failing. That's true of *SSX* in the past. The action adventure element is another more tactical race from the start to the finish with a bunch of enemies in your way.

MOUNTAIN MAN

"The next big thing is the creation of levels," admits Batty. "It's normally a long, painstaking, very expensive process." The team wanted to have as many levels as they possibly could, but past experience taught them that aiming for say 35 levels when planning just wouldn't happen. "[It would] drop to 28 in pre-production, then turn into 24 levels when you're in early production, and then some cuts in alpha for quality and to get the product done in time means that you get 18 tracks, then it'll actually ship with 16 of them. And we didn't want to go down that route."

So, instead, they decided to build a tool that would eradicate that pain. Enter Mountain Man, a piece of intelligent software to model mountains. In Batty's words it's "a procedural, environment authoring tool" for creating the bulk of the content in the game.

"If we could get a computer to [construct mountains] for us, then we could spend all our time designing levels, and we could build a lot more. One of the things we did was source and download topography data of the entire planet Earth. To put that in perspective, I can open Mountain Man, enter longitude and latitude coordinates of any mountain in the world, and in about 28 seconds, it will generate a 100,000 polygon model of that mountain."

Batty tells us that it's possible to stand on the summit of Mount Everest using Mountain Man, and look around in every compass direction for

4000 miles. "You can look down the valley and figure out where Nepal is."

Their next problem was not the man-hours needed to create, but the amount of time needed to find the great runs they wanted to use in the game. "So for example, Mount Blanc, which is on the border between France and Italy, one of the most iconic mountains in the world, hundreds of people die there every year, it's not a place a typical person could go and snowboard down, so we thought that'd be cool."

However, despite Batty telling us he's "learnt more about mountains in the last two years than I did in my entire educational youth," they still had the problem of finding the perfect runs for their games, routes that would still capture the essence of an *SSX* track. So they turned to Mountain Man.

"In the early days, we'd take all this data and get Mountain Man to scan all the topography of the Earth, and we'll think about what would make a great run. We spent a bunch of days thinking about steepness, vertical descent by horizontal rise, and we want to start at a high altitude and go to a low altitude. We want to favour summit descents through valleys, we don't want to cross the top of ridges we want to stay along them or within valleys, we want this number of turns at this amount of frequency, and spent a bunch of time trying to teach Mountain Man to do that. We thought, 'Okay, we've found what we think is a definition, rules-based, of what a perfect run should be', and we left Mountain Man overnight to scan all the topography of planet Earth to see if it could find us our perfect run. We came in the next morning and it had found 4.3 million of them."

An awesome proposition at first quickly turned into a nightmare. "We don't do that anymore. We just figure out which mountains we want to ride and where on the face we want to drop the player and we go from there."

The goal is to have something thrilling – something very much in the spirit of *SSX* – with lots of options: tunnels to go through, paths that criss-cross, and jumps that weave over the top of one another. Batty's team are taking 'creative liberties' with the mountains whilst staying true to the region. You'll be able to fall through a gap in a glacier and find another path below it, rather than plummeting to your death like in previous *SSX* titles. Remember, this isn't a simulation.

"In truth, riding the north face of Everest is like skipping along in a freefall and just trying to dodge rocks. It's harrowing, but it doesn't feel anything like *SSX*," says Batty. Having 4.3 million runs at your fingertips still means each one would need to be honed, shaped and sculpted to be right for the game: not a viable proposition. Still, that's potentially the next 5,000 years of DLC accounted for, not including the time it'd take to turn them from realistic structures into something that would be thrilling to ride in an *SSX* game. ▶




If this was *Prototype*, you'd flying kick that shit

POP! GOES THE CULTURE

What do J.J. Abrams, the PC game *Plants Vs. Zombies* and Christopher Nolan have in common? They're all influences on the new *SSX*. J.J. Abrams took a very hardcore franchise and turned it into a great popcorn movie that still appealed to Trekkies. *SSX*'s inventory system employs stripped-back approach like *Plants Vs. Zombies*, while Christopher Nolan's updated Joker illustrates the similarities, but also the differences, between the past and present.

"We look at it on a very simple level. If *SSX* was Jack Nicholson as The Joker – a cartoony and colourful character – then 2010 *SSX* is Heath Ledger's The Joker – still true to the character, he still has a painted face, a crazy smile and he's still wearing a purple coat – but reinvented in such a way that feels more relevant in today's pop culture."



**"ONE OF THE THINGS
WE DID WAS SOURCE
AND DOWNLOAD
TOPOGRAPHY DATA
OF THE ENTIRE
PLANET EARTH"**

CARVE IT UP

So what is a deadly descent? It's an elemental challenge that's considered to be a boss fight in the otherwise usual series of races, trick and other survival events. "We change the presentation to deliver the broadest experience possible," says Batty. "So if I'm in a trick event and I'm listening to awesome tunes and they're changing and reacting to the way I play, then we'll go to a different place to get a broad spectrum of experiences. A deadly descent is harsh weather, dark angry skies and cinematic-type music."

The list so far is rock, ice, snow, thin air, gravity, cold, fog, darkness and wind. Mount Aoraki in New Zealand is the wind challenge, blowing snow and ice around. A Siberian mountain is the ice challenge where you need ice axes for those jumps you don't quite make. Mount Denali in Alaska is the snow challenge, and the team has crafted a complex avalanche model. "It's not just an arbitrary animation, it's snow spray which are physics particles. As they roll down the mountain they hit areas of stability and instability, and they either die out or pick up more particles. From a tiny bit of snow, to a tiny bit of fluff, to a big fluff slide, to category 1 avalanche, to a category 3 or 4 or 5 avalanche. You ride in the face of it, you can outmaneuver it, you ride on top of it, or be buried underneath it."

Mount Fitzroy, in the southern Andes, is the gravity challenge where you need your wing suit. "We're taking a leap of faith and allowing the player to pop off a huge jump, fly and glide down to a different area, un-deploy your wing suit and keep riding," says Batty. Mount Vinson in Antarctica is cold, where the temperature can drop 40 to 50 degrees centigrade in a second as you go from sunlight to shade. It's a place where people can literally be flash frozen. For the Thin Air descent you're at an altitude where there isn't enough oxygen to sustain life - "you're technically dying" - so you're not only racing yourself but also a descent rate where if you don't get down quick enough you'll black out.



Pro tip: ingest the yellow snow for special power-ups

POWDER TO THE PEOPLE

When the game launches next year there will be 18 open mountain ranges encompassing 70 completely open mountains, with a total of over 200 drop points across the lot. A staggering prospect when you consider *SSX 3* had 15 tracks over just one mountain. "There are no fences, barriers or places you can't go, unless Nature says you can't go there because there's a giant cliff where if you fall down into it you'll die," stresses Batty. "Our goal is to take you to the places you can't go. I figure if someone wants to ride Whistler they'll grab a board and go to Whistler."

With freedom comes choice, and you're still left to find the runs that are going to lift your stomach into your mouth. It's a problem common to all open world games: finding the thrills. The team has built an interface that will be familiar to anyone who uses Google Earth.

A giant, exaggerated globe acts as the menu system. Viewed from space you can see the ranges all over the planet, but select a range and you seamlessly dive down towards the mountains encompassed within. Pick a mountain and you get closer to the surface, rotating around the peak using your DualShock. Find the drop point you want to land on and your helicopter will take you there.

Though it's relatively straightforward to get to these points there's the problem of knowing which ones will be the most suitable to your style of play. There is a Campaign mode that takes you all over the world but we quickly realised there's still a huge amount of scope within those tracks. How will people know where to go, or find the 'preferred' way down the mountain?

"In order to solve that we went outside of games and we thought about 'who else suffers from that sort of problem, who has a lot of stuff, and a lot of that stuff is good and a lot of that stuff is not so good'. Think about what Amazon would do about that: how would they solve that? People who like this also like *this*, and given today's technology and telemetry data I'll leave the rest to your imaginations."

GAME ON

The tagline 'Deadly Descents' is more than a clever catchphrase, it's a riff on other real world races and feats of endurance. In mountain climbing culture there's an achievement called The Seven Summits where a person has to climb the peak of each of the tallest mountains on the world's seven continents. There's also the eight-thousanders, 14 peaks in the world whose cumulative total is over 8000 metres. Conquer those and you're part of an elite club that will definitely have a beer bought for them anywhere on the planet.

In *SSX*'s campaign mode, a trio tired of the usual commercialised competitions make their own: the Nine Deadly Descents. Each of these nine iconic peaks holds a unique environmental challenge, and it's up to you to conquer the lot. These descents aren't the entire game, but they refer to what the Batty calls the game's 'boss fights' (see 'Carve It Up') that occur at sanctioned times.

The *SSX* trio are all ex-pros of their sports: surfing, snowboarding and moto-X. Hence the moniker *SSX*. The riders on the tour are working together to conquer this magnificent challenge, but one of them decides he ("or she," says Batty. "We haven't finalised that yet") wants the glory for himself. Cue antagonist.

The riders that are left at your disposal have different attributes and skills, which will be integral to defying the deadly descents. For example, Elise – a returning character from the series – has a wing suit, so you'll need to pick her to take on the steepest terrain. Your choice on which rider you choose to 'be' is now based on more than just finding the person that looks the best or has the most appealing soundbite.

By extension, this also means the gear you have has an impact on how you play. We saw a slide of gloves, shoes, boards and so on that had different

levels or attributes. This isn't the final list, but it will be an "inventory-lite system, not as heavy handed like an RPG," says Batty.

Helicopters aren't only a form of transportation; they're an essential part of your character. Each rider has their own chopper and pilot, and they can be customised. Most excitingly they'll add to the action adventure moments. Batty was coy about revealing much about this, but we know that pilots will drop flares to illuminate a path down the mountain. Maybe the billowing draught from the rotor will be used to guide the rider on a more extreme course – it's just a hypothesis, but totally possible.

Beyond the campaign there are two more modes that we only know are called Live and Explore. We don't know what these are – yet – but we're pretty happy to assume they tie into the game's online modes. More on those when we hear more.

SHRED THE PLANET

It sounds like a lot of changes, but *SSX* fans shouldn't freak out. Batty and his crew know what made *SSX* fun and accessible – the racing, the over the top tricks – and it's still there. This is, on paper, an example of a finely honed blueprint for the future. It's genre blurring without making a game that's so rounded it doesn't gain any traction or have any impact. The massive amount of content available equates to dozens of hours of playtime, and while the screenshots here are more brooding than the popcorn fare of say Tokyo Megaplex – which "even for the hardcore was a very polarising level," says Batty. "Half said it was their favourite of all time, half hated it and said it was like they were in a giant pinball machine" – this isn't the tone of the entire game, they're an addition to the *SSX* universe.

It just wouldn't be *SSX* otherwise. 



Air supply? [mp3 player clicks] "I'm all out of love, I'm so lost without you." Check

APACHE

AIR ASSAULT



Reader Test Flight

So you think flight sims aren't for you? Think again. The team that developed the incredible *IL-2 Sturmovik* has crafted an entire game around a legendary attack helicopter. The action's gripping and loaded with explosive moments as you pilot a multi-multi-million dollar aircraft into dangerous war zones in modern day settings.

We invited three readers to pick up a DualShock 3 and play *Apache: Air Assault* for a day. This is what they really thought.

"The missions were fun, going point to point to blow things up – just flying felt cool"



Nathan Everett

I love shooters – I'm a big fan of *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* and *Black Ops* – and I've never played any flight sims before. I like the fact you could fly around and blow stuff up with different missiles for pure entertainment! I don't know much about helicopters, except for what I've seen in the movies, but the chopper looked convincing, and the graphics were pretty realistic. I can appreciate the detail in the chopper and backgrounds

Going over an oil tanker in one of the scenarios was hectic with the mass of enemies on and around it, as they were constantly firing at the Apache. The missions were fun, going point to point to blow things up – just flying felt cool. When the enemies are firing back it became difficult, but entertaining, and it was really satisfying blending together movement and shooting.

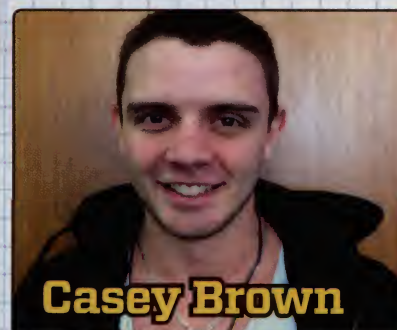
Since I've never played a flight sim it felt hard at first, especially, but I got used to the full sim controls pretty quickly. The sound was realistic, with the rockets flying around. The chatter of my co-pilot made it feel very atmospheric which helped me get into the game. People should definitely take their time to learn the controls and judge how the chopper flies. It's a game worth sticking with.

Favourite moment:

Being in the air just felt really cool compared to standard action games – doing a barrel roll or trying to fly upside down was a great moment. There are a lot of tactics involved.



“ The action’s pretty intense. The spawn system’s good, so when you die you’re straight back in to the level ”



Casey Brown

I usually play RPGs and MMOs. I’m really into *World of Warcraft*, but also a lot of stuff that has loads of action in it.

Once I did the tutorial I enjoyed it a lot more, and I got engrossed in the missions that had more direction and purpose to them. I played a few missions where you can fly around the map freely but generally arrived on scene to be shot down!

It all made sense with practice, and I had a great moment when I figured out I could use flares to divert other missiles, so there are some great mechanics that you pick up and it improves the game a lot.

Visually it’s quite good, there’s one level in particular where the rotor makes ripples on the water – it looks really cool. Every missile you send into the ground makes a crater and stays there; it doesn’t look like a decal that’s painted onto the surface. The mountain layers and textures are high res, so you get quite immersed in it all.

Depending on your camera angle the sound changes, and the different views had their advantages. The nose cam was the easiest to use but seeing the chopper angling and banking in the third person view really felt like I was controlling the Apache.

Favourite moment:

In the bay there’s an oil rig with military everywhere, and I just missed crashing into it. As I scraped past the rig a missile that had been locked on to me hit the rig and it exploded. Very cool.



John Campradt

I normally play a lot of action games and strategy titles like *Starcraft 2*, and I played a flight sim earlier this year for the first time in a long time – I haven’t spent much time in the sky with planes or helicopters.

So, initially I thought it would be difficult to master the controls, but the tutorial was easy to follow and learn how to fly the chopper. The more time you spend with it the easier it gets, so when you nail it you feel like the master of the sky! There’s a real feeling of accomplishment.

I had more fun when we went into the ‘Free play mode’ and went nuts with the settings. I turned the AI bots up, the allies up and put an ocean map on and had a blast. There were guys on boats and on the docks with RPGs, all firing at the helicopter, so as

soon as you start there’s a rocket flying right past the cockpit. So you’re tilting the helicopter on its side and it’s a big adrenaline rush.

The action’s pretty intense. The spawn system’s good, so when you die you’re straight back in to the level – you don’t have to wait for everything to reload.

It’s definitely a good-looking game – the detail on the helicopter’s great, while the backgrounds are pretty nice and the water was crisp. When you hover over shallow water you see ripples from the blades. I didn’t see the frame rate drop either.

Favourite moment:

Getting a target lock-on for the first time: while you’re watching a missile zoom towards its target while you’re strafing is incredible.





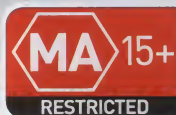
FREE to join
to play



THEY ARE COMING
24.02.11

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Stranded behind enemy lines, there's nowhere left to run: your only option is to turn and fight. Master the Helghast's fearsome weapons; make their ruthless tactics your own and turn their war machine against them. To survive Helghan, you need to know your enemy.



Strong violence, Gaming experience may change online



PS3
PlayStation 3

SONY
make.believe

in review



► GAME OF THE MONTH

Killzone 3

To Helghan and back

Review ratings

- 10 Incredible:** Perfection is relative and elusive, and no game will ever be *perfect*. Our 10 doesn't mean a game is flawless, it means a game has done everything it set out to do in an incredible fashion and thus it deserves our highest possible kudos.
- 9 Excellent:** An outstanding game, either limited by its scope, sequel status (and lack of improvement) or a few too many minor blemishes from being a 10. Likely one of the best in its genre, a 9 comes with very high praise.
- 8 Great:** Still well ahead of the pack in most departments despite a few issues here and there. Thoroughly recommended.
- 7 Good:** A robust package that does a solid job despite a handful of mild to moderate problems. Enjoyable in parts, just not fantastic overall.
- 6 Decent:** This game will have some noticeable flaws that may make it hard to recommend to those who aren't fans of the genre, but it will do more right than it does wrong. Just.
- 5 Mediocre:** A conceded pass, if you know what we mean. Half okay, but half-busted. Might scrape by for fans, but with the quality games we do have, there's no need to drop real money on a game that half sucks.
- 4 Poor:** Anything below 5, strictly speaking, is a fail – but there are degrees of 'bad' just as there are degrees of 'good'. A 4 is unrefined, partially broken and poorly designed.
- 3 Very disappointing:** Things start to go very wrong here – fundamentally flawed in many ways, boring and close to pointless.
- 2 Terrible:** Nothing good here, and definitely not worth removing the wrapper.
- 1 The worst:** Reserved for the very worst gaming could ever offer. A broken, offensive mess without a single redeeming quality. If a 10 is better than virtually every game available, a 1 is worse than virtually every game available. OPS has handed out this score only once.

This Month

- 64** Killzone 3
- 70** Mass Effect 2
- 74** LittleBigPlanet 2
- 76** Dead Space 2
- 78** Apache: Air Assault
- 79** Mindjack



▲ We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Sony Bravia for the best picture possible.

Play this
if you like

Killzone 2

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: SHOOTER

RELEASE: FEBRUARY 24 2011

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: GUERRILLA
GAMES

PLAYERS: 1-24

RRP: \$109.95





Killzone 3

Helghast. We hate these guys.
And you should too

When it comes to Hollywood, there are two types of foe that filmmakers aren't required to justify in terms of evility and abhorrence: zombies and Nazis. Whether it's a goose-stepping goon marching into focus or a once-cute now-undead girl lumbering past the camera, there is simply no need for the narrative to explain why the audience should hate them. They're Nazis, they're evil. It's a zombie, it needs to die.

So what do you get when you combine the ruthlessly genocidal tendencies of a Nazi archetype with the pale skin and flesh-eating tendencies of a zombie? Well, you get Helghast; obviously. They're about as approachable as a pride of underfed lions, they look evil, they sound sinister and they get their kicks out of butchering unarmed ISA soldiers.

If you're big on storylines and averse to seeing massive spoilers, it's advised that you finish *Killzone 2* before delving into *Killzone 3* as it pretty much picks up right where the second game left off. We say "pretty much" because there is an interesting narrative time shift at the beginning that continues through the first half of the game as the story jumps between events preceding *Killzone 2* and even six months down the track.

The first level gives players a glimpse of what life looks like under a Helghastian helmet. And even though Han and Luke had trouble seeing out of their liberated stormtrooper helmets, we'd wager they would've whined a whole lot more in Helghast headgear. Talk about a busy HUD; no wonder these guys don't see the headshots coming until it's too late.

Aside from an odd checkpoint bug that meant we had to double back, this level acts more as a tutorial than anything else. It's just a shame you have to revisit most of the gameplay of this first level later in the game.

Once again, players take on the role of Sergeant Tomas 'Sev' Sevchenko and you are first properly introduced to him when he's lamenting on a set of familiar stairs outside a familiar palace where a familiar head honcho from *Killzone 2* may/may not be lying in a pool of his own blood. It's not long before Sev's brother in arms, Rico, is being chastised by a Captain Jason Narville for his inability to obey orders – a theme that carries out through the duration of the campaign.

From the opening cutscene of *Killzone 3*, we were sucked into the game. Brian Cox's familiar tones make a welcome return, which are sure to send some familiar shivers down your spine. It's not long before this powerhouse Hollywood voice actor is complemented by two equally recognisable and talented voices. Ray 'BEOWULF' Winstone nails his take on the warmongering Admiral Orlock, while Malcolm 'Alex DeLarge' McDowell plays the delightfully reprehensible Jorhan Brimv Stahl, the head of a Helghast private weapons sector.

These two new Helghan leaders are both keen to wear the crown, offering players an engaging insight into the daily goings-on of the under-handed upper echelons of the Helghan empire. And by daily goings-on we, of course, mean the discussion of inhumane weaponry, the progress of genocide and the sort of idle chitchat over tea and scones you'd expect to have with Space Stalin and Astro Hitler.





Fighting a robo-rubbish heap? **Aim for its junk**

Any *Killzone* veteran will be right at home with how *Killzone 3* handles, but it's the little tweaks and improvements across the board that offer the best experience to date. The cover system takes on a much more fluid approach than *Killzone 2*. If you're sprinting, you can seamlessly slide into cover, with the game detecting the type of cover (basically, horizontal or vertical) and snapping you into the appropriate stance when you get there.

There is no longer a knife slot; instead **U** is the default button for a regular melee attack that introduces Helghast head to rifle butt, or the ever-satisfying brutal melee takedowns. These finishing moves are offered by way of an onscreen prompt that takes those Hig bastards down in such delightfully gory ways.

Sneak up on an unsuspecting foe and you can cut his throat. Take him on when he's facing you and you might slash his voice box, stab him in the eye or, our personal favourite, push his sinister goggles through his eyes and into his brain. There's also the possibility for contextual takedowns, such as sending an enemy Wilhelm Screaming off a nearby ledge or bashing his head against an unforgiving wall.

Killzone handles cover a little differently than other games. While you can shoot over concealment, either from the hip or using iron sights, the vast majority of so-called cover will leave you rather exposed to Helghast lead. Because *Killzone 3* makes use of the tried and proven hide-to-heal mechanic, you will spend quite a lot of time crouched behind low walls.

While there are vertical cover options that keep you properly sheltered, these are in shorter supply than the low half-cover kind that litter the battlefield. If, like us, you adopt a 'rush in and shoot first, think about tactics later' approach to first-person shooters expect to get taken down a lot.

Couple this with the Helghan tendency to throw grenades at you if you stay in any spot for more than a breath, and you'll want to be constantly on the move.

The great thing about the abundance of half-cover and locust-like swarms of Helghan hand grenades is that it makes almost every firefight a frantic and fast-paced affair. Better yet, the level design is fantastic for the options it gives the player, with multiple approaches on enemy positions. Sure, there are the obligatory funnelled single-approach sections, but a lot of the time there will be a few different ways to sidle up to and take out the Helghans; and we're not talking about the movie and a meal variety either.

You can often flank entrenched baddies, get behind them or climb a nearby ladder to rain death and bullet-based justice from above. But if you can do it, so can they – and they will. We were rather impressed with the AI that actively sought cover, relocated when coping too much heat and put down covering fire to make sure you weren't getting too cocky. They can hide behind low cover in ways that the player cannot, and even roll out to take shots at you; apparently these skills aren't taught at the ISA military academy at all.

The other consideration that rush-junkies such as us need to take into account is the game's revival mechanic. If you take one too many bullets, you'll bite the dust as the world starts to get darker around you. From here, it's up to Rico or Captain Narville to get you back into the fight with their magical insta-heal ray. But you'll be taking a gamble every time you go down, especially on the harder difficulties.

This is one of the most frustrating parts of *Killzone 3*'s campaign. There are a few lines of dialogue that indicate that your AI teammates are on their way to help you, which instils a sense of hope that you won't be going back to the last checkpoint. But it's a bit of a coin toss as to whether they actually get you up. There were many times when they were standing over my corpse and doing nothing, other times they claimed they couldn't get to me when they were close by and others still when the insta-heal ray came out but we weren't revived.

You're the rocket man

One of the new features of *Killzone 3* that was hyped on about before the release of the game was the inclusion of jetpacks. As it relates to the campaign, the jetpack is very much of the singular variety, as it only comes in to play on one level. Even then, it's more of a Doc Brown device that only keeps you in the air for short periods of time before it needs to recharge. The inbuilt machine gun and forward thrusters save it from being a total disappointment but, for anyone thinking they'll be able to turn into a mechanical cloud of lead rain, curb your enthusiasm right now.

The very last thing a **marshmallow** sees

“ A BFG in its own right, the Arc Cannon **fires through and around objects** ”



Nothing says 'stealth' like **bright blue lights**



Kill him and light a cigar off that **to win at life**

This was particularly frustrating when trying to play aggressively and wondering whether your incapacitation would undo your last heroic efforts, or whether your friends would pull their digital fingers out and get you back up in time.

While anyone who played through *Killzone 2* will know that the series is certainly no stranger to epic set pieces, *Killzone 3* steps it up a notch. Early on in the game you'll be fighting through an ash-filled and war-torn city, which later becomes dangerous Helghan marshes, which is begotten by icy exteriors and there's even some clever zero-g space station combat to finish it all off.

Each environment has its own feel and certain elements that make it both unique and memorable. Standard head-on firefights are a given, but tense rooftop sniper shootouts, destructive vehicular missions and stealth sections ensure that the campaign doesn't get stale. Guerrilla has expertly combined this potent cocktail in such a way that it feels organic and goes down smooth.

The continuation of the war on Helghan means that many weapons in your arsenal are the same as *Killzone 2*. With the exception of the shotgun (which is now of the pump-action variety) that felt underpowered, all returning weapons handle well. But as tried-and-true these old favourites can be at topping those hard-to-kill Helghast soldiers. But the real shining stars of *Killzone 3*'s arsenal are the new additions.

A fully-automatic silenced submachine gun makes its first appearance on a stealth mission and is great for killing without being heard. Pop up the iron sights to activate a deadly single-shot fire rate that's perfect for headshots. While you won't get it until later in the game, the StA5X Arc Cannon is the greatest FPS weapon we've seen since the Gravity Gun in *Half-Life 2*. A BFG in its own right, the Arc Cannon fires through and around objects, permeating hapless foes with ▶



SkyNet: "I said ignore my glowing kneecaps, human!"

Sharp Shooter

Any *Killzone* fan looking to try out the exciting new possibilities of a Move-powered first-person shooter experience should consider purchasing the Sharp Shooter peripheral. Unfortunately we didn't get a chance to try this bad boy out but it is one of the sexiest light-gun peripherals we've ever seen. The Move Motion Controller slots in to the front of the gun, while the Navigation Controller fits on to the bottom hand grip, making it perfect for controlling and holding the device. With an extendable butt, underneath reload button and bayonet-thrust-activated melee functionality, the only real challenge of this device will be how long you can hold it up for. But hey, you get that with motion-based gaming.

Ghostbusters-like green energy that ends with the same wet, splattery results as the Doctor Manhattan vs. Vietcong showdown. Pro tip: avoid getting shot by it.

And then there are the glorious mounted weapons. Jump on a mounted minigun to mow down waves upon waves of bad dudes, or detach it and play it Blain. You'll be laughing so hard as you shred through the Helghast that you won't have time to bleed.

Later in the campaign you'll also gain access the multi-purpose mounted grenade launcher known as The Wasp. True to its name, if you're hit by it, it'll sting somewhat. Locking onto a target quickly and pressing fire will send a swarm of angry explosive pods twisting their way to their unfortunate victim. Alternatively, if you zoom in you can create an artillery lock that will fire all your explosive trinkets high into the air only to send them back down to earth with utterly devastating results.

One of the most exciting things about *Killzone 3* is how keen Sony has been to offer a practical example of how well 3DTV technology can translate to first-person shooters on the PlayStation 3. Initially it was underwhelming in the first vehicular-based mission we tried it on, but the potential of the tech soon dawned on us when we were back on foot.

Any introduced HUD data, be it weapon selection or text about your next objective, pops out above the rest of the on-screen visuals. This means that it instantly grabs your attention as it appears in a more prominent fashion than all other displayed visual data. Better yet, it adds a breathtaking level of visceral player engagement when you're under fire as smoke trails whizz past your head and telltale red lasers from enemy snipers make you want to literally duck for cover. Don't laugh, you'll probably find yourself doing it too. We went in expecting the 3D element to be okay, but left as champions for the tech.

The other new innovation in the franchise is the inclusion of Move support for *Killzone 3*. And the great news is that it works like an absolute charm. After a quick calibration in the main menu, you're up and ready to play the game like you've never played a PlayStation first-person shooter before. The Move Navigation Controller is used to handle all of your movement, cover mechanics and weapon selection, while the Move Motion Controller takes care of aiming, shooting, melee and reloading.

Simply whisk the Motion Controller around the screen to change where you're looking, shoot with the trigger underneath and rotate your wrist about smartly when you need to reload: basic!

Best of all, for the PC savvy, we're happy to say that the Move aiming system is actually the closest experience we've ever had to the replication of mouse-like accuracy. The sensitivity, lock-assist and even the 'deadzone' can all be customised to make the Move control system as user-friendly or hardcore as you want to make it for yourself.



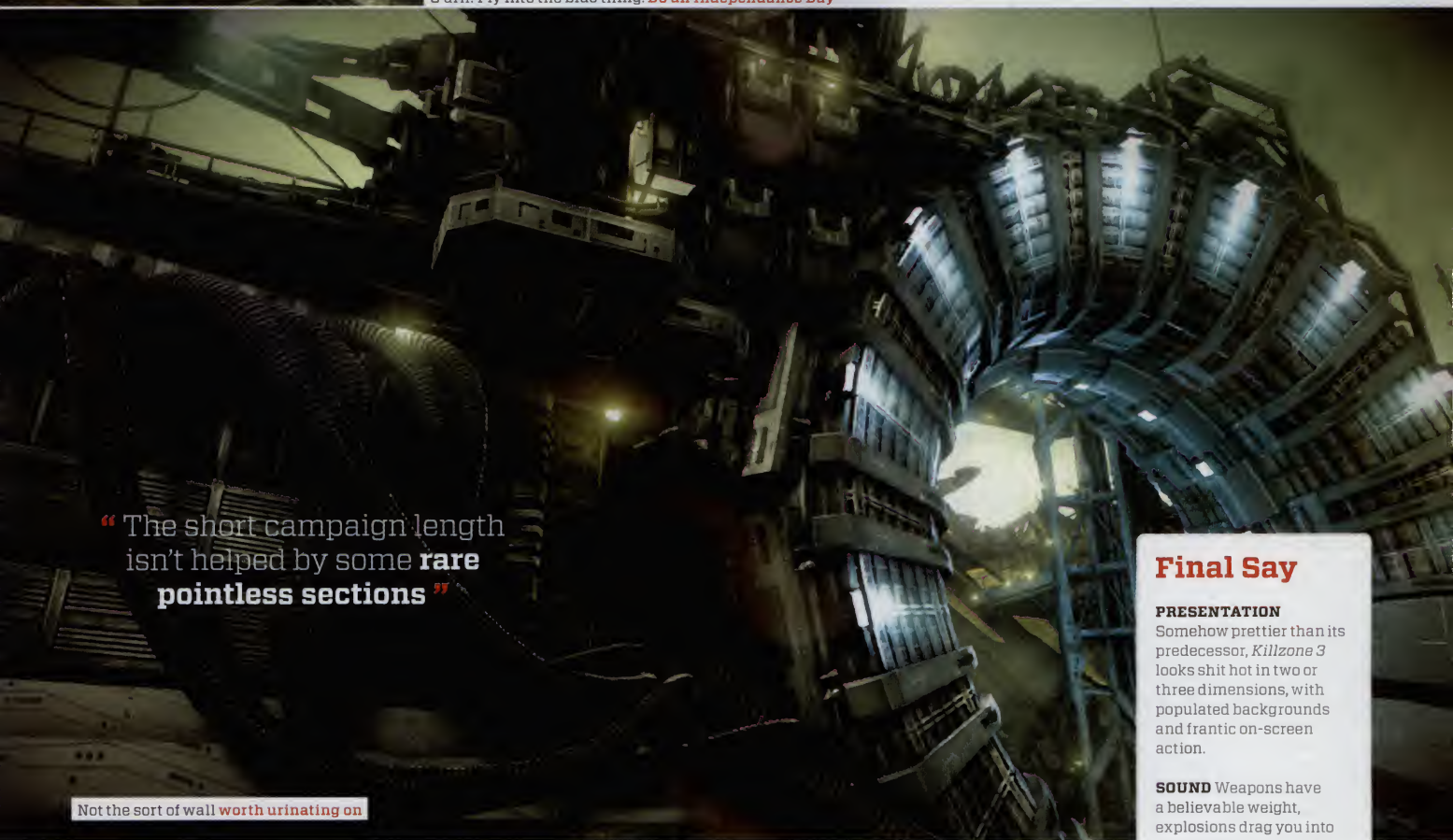
10 bucks if you turn that gun on Rico. No? 20



C'arn! Fly into the blue thing. **Do an Independence Day**

Minor setbacks

Make no mistake, *Killzone 3* is an amazing title; but it's not without some ghosts in the Helghast machine. Odd graphics-pop issues sporadically crop up in cut-scenes and gameplay, while checkpoint pauses range from minor and ignorable to full-fledged hold-your-breath stops. The short campaign length isn't helped by some rare pointless sections that are devoid of combat and seem to act as bridges between cut-scenes more than anything else. Guns are notoriously difficult to pick up sometimes and may even disappear into objects rendering them uncollectable. While there are other minor issues, they all pale in comparison to a well-produced title that nails it across the board the majority of the time.



"The short campaign length isn't helped by some **rare pointless sections**"

Not the sort of wall **worth urinating on**

Killzone 3 also offers full cooperative support for the campaign with the second player slotting in to the role combat boots of Natko. Unfortunately, this mode is only being offered in an offline split-screen capacity, and this takes the form of pre-*Black Ops* *Call of Duty* games with a lot of screen real estate wasted with long strips of black space.

Couple this with very noticeable texture rendering that materialise as you get close to people/objects, and cooperative starts to feel a lot more tacked on and a whole lot less awesome than it could have been. But we digress, it's still a lot of fun to play, and having a human controlled teammate helps to negate the aforementioned issues with AI revival woes. Even still, we were expecting more.

The other single-player mode of the game is called 'Botzone' and it acts as a really great entry point for anyone looking to enter the online fray (but doesn't enjoy getting panted by the pros). All three multiplayer play modes are on offer with a total of six maps to memorise. Here you can try your hand with the five different classes,

toying with the various customisation options, all the while fighting with and against up to 15 other bots. Botzone plays a little differently to what you pick up from the campaign, so it's well worth logging some time in here before stepping into the online foray.

When all the smoke has cleared, *Killzone 3* stands as a fantastic entry to the series and an engrossing action romp for any fan of the first-person shooter genre. All of the things we loved about *Killzone 2* have made a return and have been built upon. However, with some minor issues across the board and a campaign length that's a little too *Modern Warfare 2* for our liking, *Killzone 3* is held back from the dizzying heights of perfection.

But overall it's difficult to fault a sequel as ambitious as this. Guerilla Games has worked extremely hard to dazzle you with epic cinematic moments, memorable firefights and an engaging storyline. As a very tasty side-bonus all of this is complemented by the unnecessary but welcome inclusion of some truly next-gen tech.

Nathan Lawrence

Final Say

PRESENTATION

Somehow prettier than its predecessor, *Killzone 3* looks shit hot in two or three dimensions, with populated backgrounds and frantic on-screen action.

SOUND

Weapons have a believable weight, explosions drag you into the battlefield and it's all rounded off by an engaging Joris de Man score.

CONTROLS

Completely customisable and intuitive in their default state; the addition of Move makes it even better.

REPLAY VALUE

The epic campaign with memorable cinematic moments deserves a second play through, albeit without much legitimate in-game incentive to do so.

Verdict

One of the best shooter experiences we've had in a long time. *Killzone 3* is a killer.

9

Play this
if you like

Fallout 3

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: RPG

RELEASE: NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: BIOWARE

PLAYERS: 1

RRP: \$109.95



Mass Effect 2

Do you need some space?

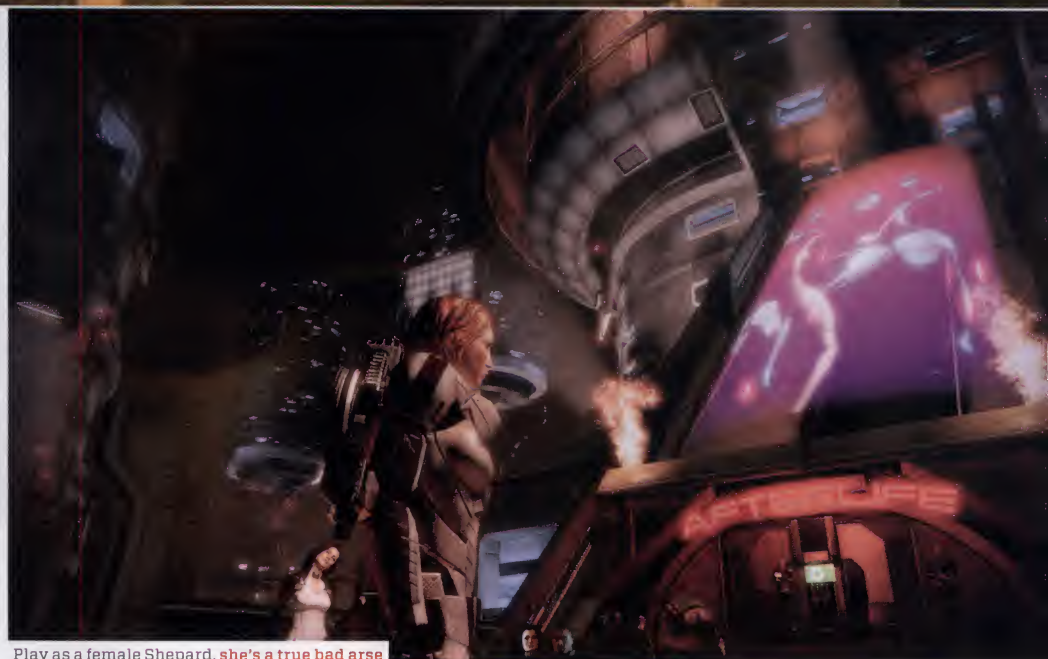
Mass Effect 2 possesses all the ingredients of the ultimate sci-fi fantasy. A virtual version of you is handed the keys to the galaxy's most bitchin' spacerod in order to belt around the cosmos, meet strange new lifeforms and either shoot or shag them. Yes sir, not a star-date will go by in *ME2* without you doing something ballsy enough to warrant a double fist-bump from James T. Kirk and Han Solo.

The official parameters of your mission are a bit more specific, of course. As the unisex amalgam, Commander [insert your name] Shepard, you must hook up with the shady, paramilitary group, Cerberus, and use their immense resources to recruit 10 like-minded bad asses for an impossible errand. Go about your galaxy-saving task half-arsed and this "suicide mission" will become just that. If the fat lady sings at the end of this space opera – and you're dead – you'll have no save-file to continue with in *Mass Effect 3*.

Therein lies *ME2*'s greatest hook: real emotional investment. After fastidiously creating our very own Shepard, forging an elite fire-team and dropping 30 hours on gaining every advantage we possibly could: we found that not only did we not want to let *ourselves* down – but *our team* as well. We know that sounds stupid on paper. But the fact is no RPG has made us care more about our NPCs than this game and no final mission in recent memory has felt this thrilling.

The second big advantage *ME2* has is in its accessibility for a broad spectrum of gamers. If the only experience you have of BioWare's work is the menu-farm, quasi-turn-based affair that was *Dragon Age: Origins*, you shouldn't use it as a yardstick for this particular star trek. *ME2* is an action RPG all the way soldier, and when you drop planet-side to dispense justice your three man team has no intentions of taking "gentlemanly turns" with the enemy.

A firefight in *ME2* plays out like a fast-paced, tactical, third-person shooter. All the usual fixtures are in place: an array of futuristic weapons (modelled after current-era guns, like shotguns, sniper rifles, SMGs), cover mechanics and the



Play as a female Shepard, **she's a true bad arse**

ability to freeze time to issue squad commands. Being sci-fi you do get some unique choices in combat for the specialists in your team too, such as the ability to 'hack' enemy shields, unleash combat drones and bend the rules of physics to break your foes with biotic powers (that is, Force abilities). The action gets pretty intense in any difficulty above hardcore and the battle UI is so streamlined it's a cinch to get your head around things. Which is much more preferable to having it blown off.

Interestingly, the simplification of things has continued across to the inventory and levelling up sections of the game – and it may cause consternation with the stat-obsessed micromanagers among you. The acquisition of better equipment almost seems to happen automatically and the grind for XP also occurs on the periphery of the experience, rather than being

Not a fan of the scan?

Here's the quickest way to make planet scanning more painless. Recruit 'The Scientist' first to unlock the tech compartments on the Normandy. Next, ask Miranda about her ideas on upgrading the Normandy. This will unlock the Advanced Mineral Scanner which will allow you to scroll faster whilst scanning.

Later on, recruit 'The Assassin' and ask him about upgrades to unlock a Modular Probe Bay which doubles your probe holding capacity.

You can also use the same technique when recruiting 'The Justicar' to double The Normandy's fuel capacity. Now go to Uranus.

Krogans have four testicles. **No, seriously**



“Be utterly seduced by the masterful, black-hole deep narrative on offer here”

the driving focus of your efforts. The sensation of becoming increasingly powerful certainly isn't absent: you'll care about what class your Shepard is and how to equip and evolve the team to cover your shortcomings. But at the end of the day *ME2* is less about 'taking in numbers' and much more about taking names and handing out arses. You'd have to be an unimaginative human calculator to crack the sads over such a paradigm shift.

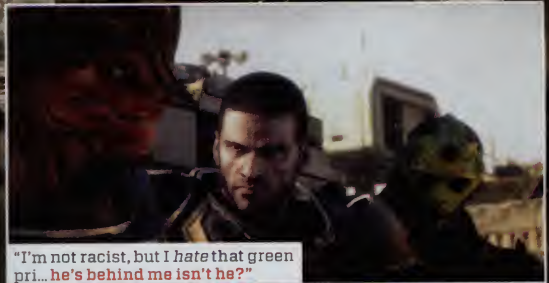
No, we think the more sedate RPG gamers will put aside their love of the grind and be utterly seduced by the masterful, black-hole-deep narrative on offer here. Along with a superb script and voice-cast, you're given an 'Interactive Backstory Comic' that easily introduces you to the pre-existing *Mass Effect* universe. It also lets you make six of the major plot decisions in the original (which affect your story in *ME2* and beyond). A comic is obviously not as good as an updated port of the original game – but even still, this is an attractive substitute teacher that serves its purpose well enough and is soon forgotten.

Frankly, you'll be much more concerned with making present-day decisions in *ME2* to really

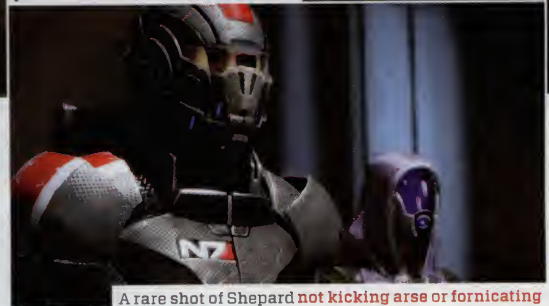
care about what went down two years ago. The overwhelming majority of the people you meet – and indeed all of your recruits – are being introduced to Shepard (and, by extension, you) for the very first time. Your brand new ship will soon become filled with a rich tapestry of personalities, each of whom come with an in-depth personal history and a sense of loyalty that cannot be bought via a menu. You'll need to earn it.

How you go about your “crew woo” is completely up to you and the many, many conversational choices you'll make. Thanks to a morality meter, every action your Shepard takes will feel like it causes massive ripples throughout the galaxy around you: some good, others bad.

The path of the 'Paragon' is one of fair words, selflessness and quick-time actions that can prevent others from making hasty decisions. Being a 'Renegade' is basically dedicating your life to being a colossal dick: if people disagree with you, you punch them out windows. Specialising in one path is the way to go as a high rating in each can earn you special conversation options and opportunities. That said, there's



“I'm not racist, but I hate that green pri... he's behind me isn't he?”

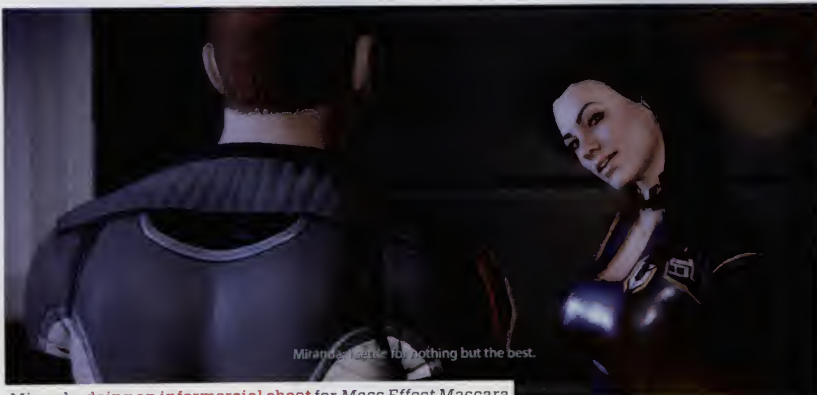


A rare shot of Shepard not kicking arse or fornicating

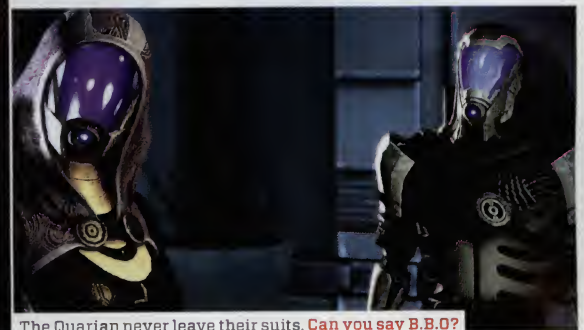
nothing stopping you from being a curious mix of the two as well. *ME2* is all about freedom of choice and it's truly intoxicating to see the results reflected back at you.

Though we have heaped the greatest honour we have on it, *ME2* is not quite perfection. A lot of your weapons, ship upgrades and credit supply has to be funded by exploring uncharted space, discovering planets and milking them for their precious resources via probes. That sounds like a blast in theory, but in practical application it's an undertaking that can feel as fruitless as the 'comb the desert' skit from *Spaceballs*.

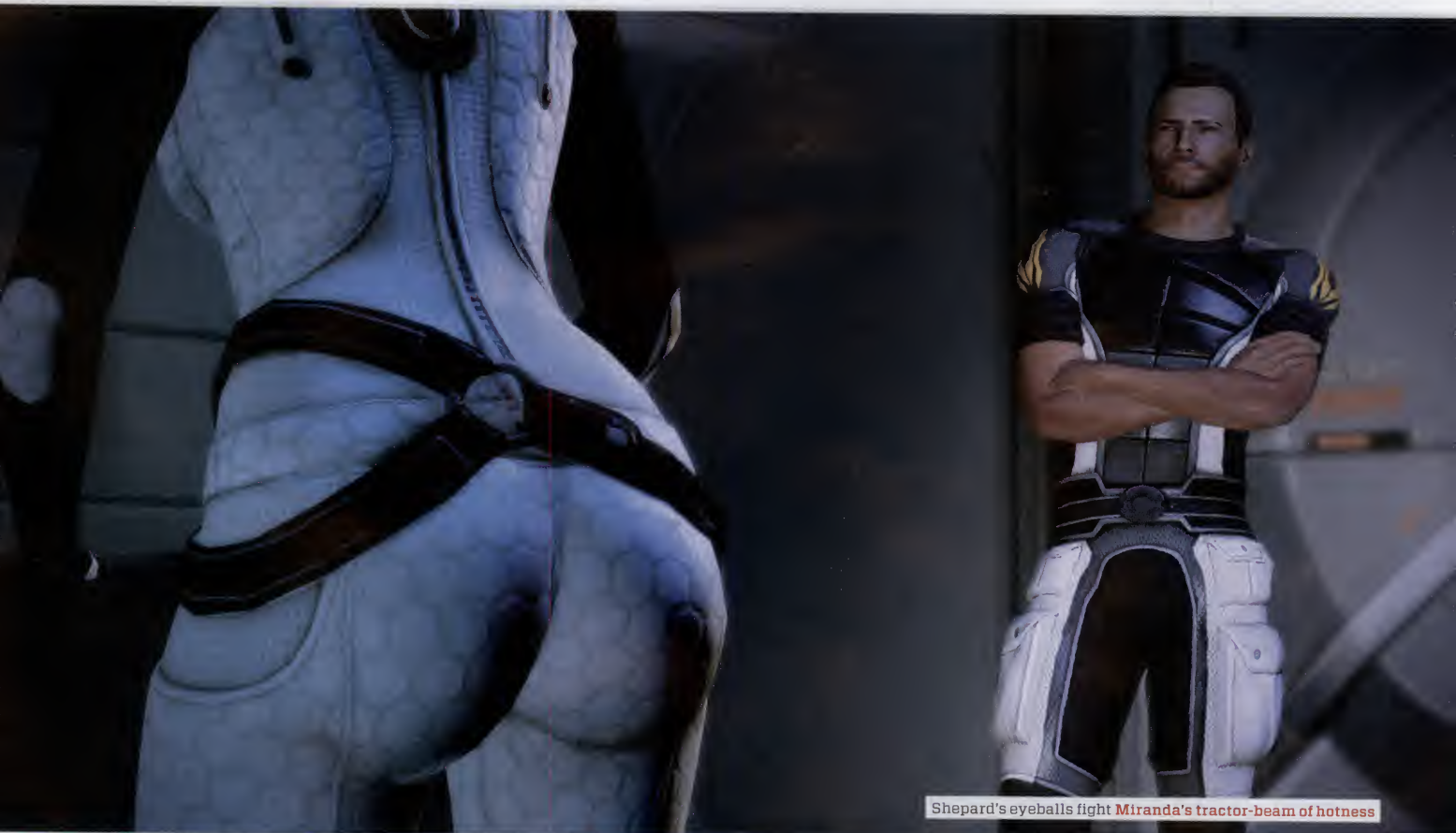
Revolving around a planet and gazing at a fluctuating 'seismograph' can reap you epic cashola but you also get all the fun of sitting still, being quiet, watching numbers and paying attention. Yes, planet scanning *has it all*. But we digress, the process can be made quicker and easier via a few upgrades, and it can even be hilarious sometimes (try to probe Uranus and see what your ship AI says).



Miranda, doing an informercial shoot for Mass Effect Mascara



The Quarian never leave their suits. Can you say B.B.O?


Shepard's eyeballs fight **Miranda's tractor-beam of hotness**

Beyond that, the PS3 version of *ME2* represents a massive time investment on your part, thanks to it being absolutely jam-packed with 'free DLC' extras (that 360 owners had to pay extra for). Early adopters can score some über-equipment (including Blood Dragon armour and a freakin' "black hole launcher"), plus there's a good five hours worth of side-story content in the form of The Lair of the Shadow Broker, Project Overlord and Kasumi: Stolen Memory. With these sizeable extras bolstering an already lengthy main plot, you won't be leaving this wonderful universe any time soon.

Nor will you want to extricate yourself. *ME2* is a thoroughly engrossing title that is well deserving of the avalanche of 'Game of the Year' accolades

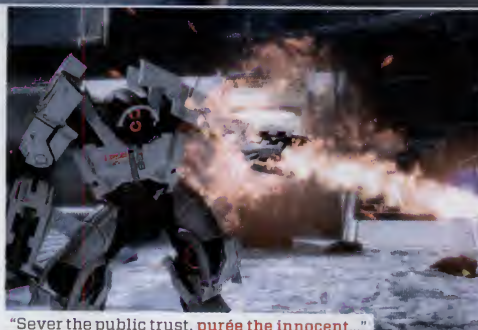
"Well deserving of the avalanche of 'Game of the Year' awards heaped upon it last year"

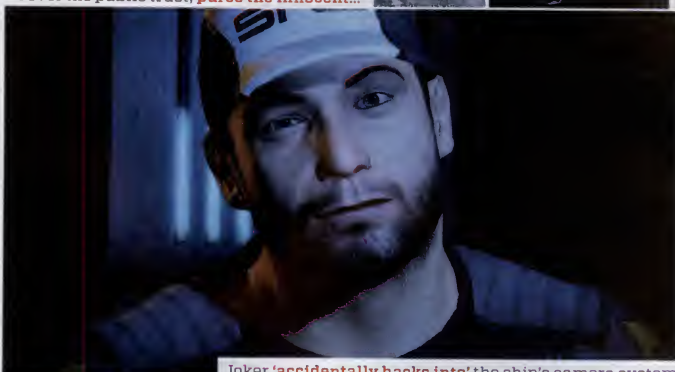
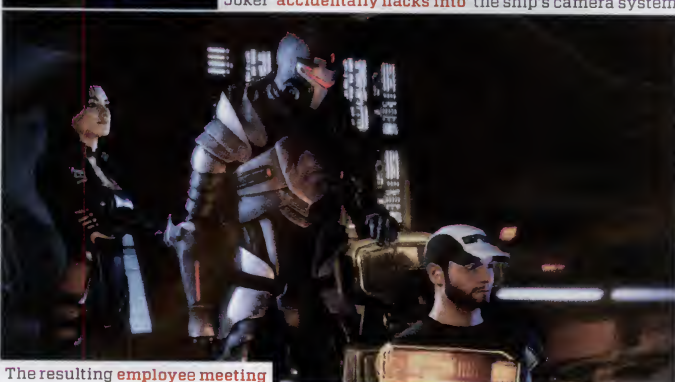
heaped upon it last year. Not even the annoyance of being made to wait this long to possess it, or the indignity of its "other console origins", can do much to lessen it in any way.

Yes, *ME2* isn't perhaps the most technical RPG ever created, but it's easily one of the slickest, bearing the unmistakable master craftsmanship of RPG luminaries, BioWare. Not only is this super-sized Sony edition of *ME2* outstanding value for money – it also represents a sound long-term investment. If the *Mass Effect 3* reveals are anything to go by, the conclusion of this saga will be similarly unmissable and the galactic apocalypse will be decided in our own backyard: Earth.

If you choose to skip *Mass Effect 2* now you'll not only be cheating yourself out of a seminal gaming experience, you'll be squandering the chance to pre-prepare [insert your name] Shepard for humanity's most darkest hour. Choose your next decision wisely, Commander. It's a big one.

Adam Mathew


"Sever the public trust, **purée the innocent...**"

"Aargh! **You shot my mother...board**"

Joker **'accidentally hacks into'** the ship's camera system

The resulting **employee meeting**

Final Say

PRESENTATION Top-shelf digital acting, superb cutscenes and great level and creature design.

SOUND Some of the best voice acting you'll hear. Rousing score too.

CONTROLS Combat is tight enough to make even the action junkies approve.

REPLAY VALUE Plenty of side-missions and a slew of DLC to sift through. Adios, social life.

Verdict

Though it took a full sun rotation to actually get to us, this is one shooting star that hasn't dimmed in the slightest.

10

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if you like

LittleBigPlanet

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: PLATFORMER

RELEASE: NOW

DISTRIBUTION: SONY

DEVELOPER: MEDIA

MOLECULE

PLAYERS: 1-4

RRP: \$109.95



LittleBigPlanet 2

The Sack is back and brimming with new goodies!

Reviewing a title like *LittleBigPlanet 2* is a strange gig. From any objective standpoint *LBP* and *LBP2* are amazing games, from both technical and creative perspectives. However, some folks just don't get it.

So to save those people time: if you didn't like *LBP*, chances are you won't like *LBP2*. Just because you were born without any imagination or poetry in your soul doesn't mean you're a bad person. It just means you'll miss out on all the cool stuff in life and die alone and angry.

So for the rest of you: *LBP2* dramatically improves almost every aspect of *LBP*. First up is a robust and often hilarious Story mode, replete with a very respectable narrative, stunningly varied environments, numerous game styles and

characters you actually relate to or at the very least laugh with. Variety gets cranked up too in Story mode. One moment you'll be swinging your way around a jungle, the next you'll be riding on a honey-shooting bee in an 8-bit style, side scrolling shooter and then trying to ensure the survival of a cadre of sackbots – where you control their actions, *Lemmings*-style.

Getting more into the nuts and bolts, the game is ocular joy. The improved particle physics gives us better looking explosions, especially the splattery, slimy cake monsters, and the level design is just spectacular. It's not all eye candy, though, we also have loads more music and numerous physics fix-ups like improving the "floaty" jumps, to new gadgets like the grappling

hook, Grabinator and Creatinator.

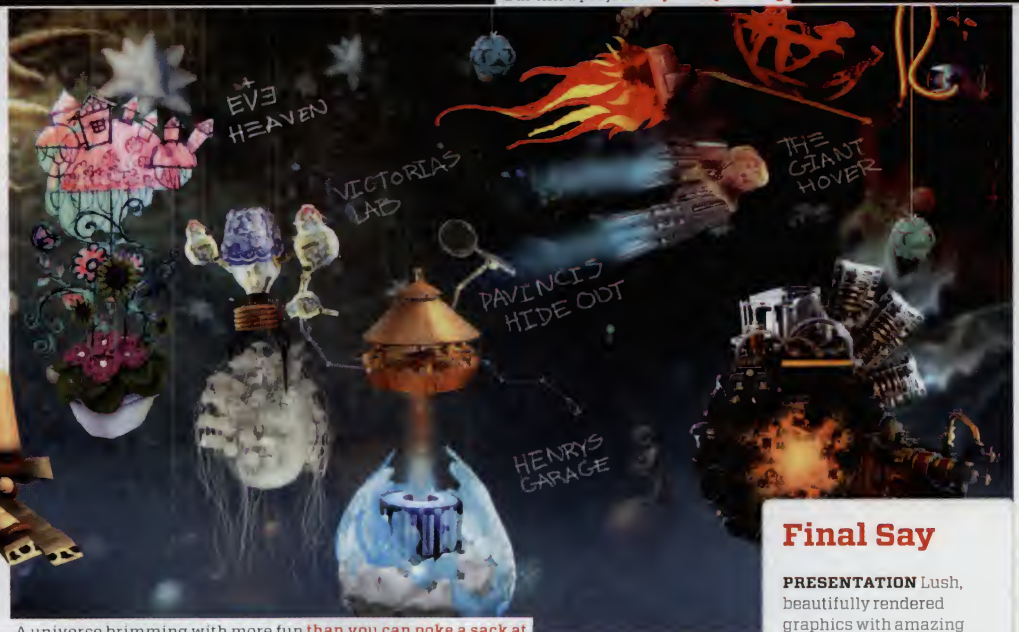
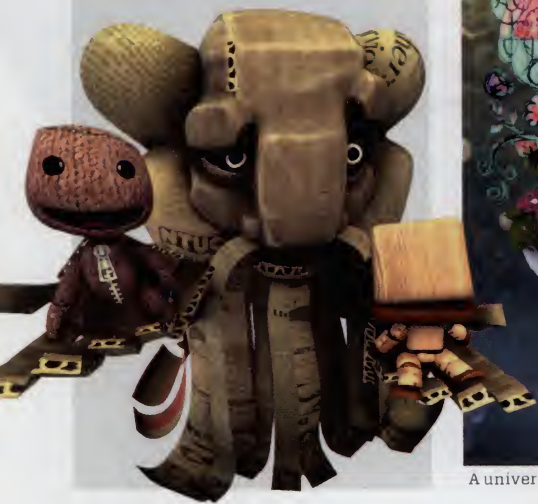
However, that's just the Story mode; arguably the carrot on the stick to make you fall in love with the game, the other big element is a much improved Create mood. Whereas *LBP* gave users the tools to create some amazing platform games, *LBP2* gives one the ability to generate almost any style of game you can conceive. From side scrolling shooters, to top down dungeon crawlers, fighting games, animated movies and competitive *Tetris* style puzzle games. It sounds like a cliché – but quite honestly the only limitation is your imagination.

By broadening the scope of what the user can create, Media Molecule has also, somehow, simplified the level creation process. Yes, you will



Sack up, bitches!

Not every level you create has to be an epic. Simple, competitive puzzle games are easy to bang together and, played with three friends, will turn your lounge room into a place of triumph and very sailorish language.



Our third project: Dry Hump Racing

A universe brimming with more fun than you can poke a sack at

have to sit through a lot of demonstrations and tutorials (narrated by the ever charming Stephen Fry). However this time around you have so much more freedom. The Creatinator is probably the best example of this title's giddy genius. It is a device that can, literally, create anything.

It can shoot water, fire, plasma, elephants, robotic bunny rabbits, monsters, pies, jump pads and, well, you get the idea. If you own it you can shoot it out of your Creatinator. Tinkering with this delightful device we managed to bung together a level that was basically a huge cliff that you had to get to the top of.

So we knocked up a bunch of branches and set the Creatinator to shoot jump pads. You can specify how high you'll jump, at what angle and how fast, so shooting the jump pad's at Sackboy's feet created a delightfully demented bouncy game to reach the top. That was accomplished in a little under ten minutes. Imagine what you can do in an hour. Or a day.

You're also not limited to one style of game even in a single level. By having level links you can start off swinging your way around a platformer, link to a vertically scrolling shooter with cyber hamsters (if that's your thing) and finish up with a racing game.

Another nice touch in the Story mode is the co-op has been greatly improved. Yes if the other players all suck it's not going to be much fun, but the camera widens a lot farther in this one. Remember in *LBP* when just walking a wee bit off screen could lead to unexpected and unfair death? It's not entirely fixed but its leagues better.

In fact that's probably the best way to describe *LBP2*. It improves upon a product that was stunning to begin with. One of the only criticisms one could level at *LBP*, if you were in from the start, was the lack of decent user-gen levels. This time around most of the 2.5 million user created levels can be played, plus all the DLC for *LBP* and the crazy *LBP2* Beta creations. If *LBP* turned you off with its platformer aesthetic then perhaps this is the time to have another look.

Quite possibly the Create mode's best feature, and there are many so it was hard to pick just one, is the ability to program

enemy and sackbot AI. Not happy with how smart or how dumb your enemies are? Make them smarter. Make them respond to proximity, or sound, or sightlines. Don't like the dopey, friendly sackbots? Turn them evil, make them fly and shoot rockets at you out of their various orifices.

It all sounds very complicated but this time the 50 tutorials can be completed at your leisure – and have an accessibility that the original did not.

Like the bewildering people who didn't like *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, *LBP2* won't be for everyone. The concept of a game with the emphasis on creation rather than playing through a narrative confounds some.

However if you're up for it – *LBP2* is one of the most rewarding, surprising and utterly charming experiences you're ever likely to have. **Anthony O'Connor**

Final Say

PRESENTATION Lush, beautifully rendered graphics with amazing particle physics. You'll not see a demonic custard tart explode more realistically.

SOUND A whole lot of great music, some created for the game, some pre-existing. *LBP2* is aural bliss.

CONTROLS Occasionally niggly, the "floaty" physics have been improved and with all the new gadgets the Story mode could be released as a perfectly acceptable solo game.

REPLAY VALUE Purely subjective, but when a game starts with over 2 million levels there's a good chance this game won't leave your PS3.


Verdict

Utterly engaging, clever and compelling, *LBP2* is already a contender for game of the year.

9

Better Beta Beater

Those of you still cynical about the variety of games one can create in *LBP2* should pop over to YouTube and check out the fighting game, Sony vs Marvel vs Capcom. That's just one of the many insanely inventive levels you'll have waiting for you.



“Most of the time you’ll just be the **‘the stupid horror movie victim’** who wanders off to their doom”

Dead Space 2

Breathe in the atmosfear



Picture this for a pickle: you wake up in a space station mental ward that’s being torn apart by psychotic prisoners, religious zealots, mutant zombies and commandos hell-bent on erasing all of the aforementioned (especially you). To top that off, you’re completely unarmed (read: in a straightjacket) and you have a form of dementia that has you seeing ghosts and trying to top yourself on occasion.

Best of luck with that.

Clearly *Dead Space 2* kicks off with a much bigger bang than the stellar original, but fans may be just as shocked by the slight tone change. Where *Dead Space* was a supremely solitary experience that had you skulking about a derelict ship feeling like you were a week late for the prom, *DS2* hurls you right in the thick of a necromorph party that’s only just reaching its

horrific zenith. We hope your favourite colour is red. You’ll be seeing a lot of it.

This new nightmare takes place upon ‘The Sprawl’ a human colony that has enough attention to detail in it to make the USG Ishimura look like it was designed by minimalists. As Isaac Clarke’s escape attempt progresses – very slowly and with a white knuckled grip on your controller – you’ll often find your eyes drawn from your objective to the many ‘mini-murder stories’ left by the level designers. Often this dillydallying will be rewarded with precious supplies. But most of the time you’ll just be the ‘stupid horror movie victim’ who wanders off to their doom.

Make no mistake; if you thought *DS* was intense, *DS2* is every bit an escalation of that. After crafting the hellish *Dante’s Inferno* in the

off-season, Visceral Games has clearly gotten its eye-in on how to ‘brown-underpant’ an audience. With *The Sprawl* they effectively tick off all of the scariest environments in the book (nuthouse, crypt, freaky cult church, etc) and they milk the dread out of each set piece with atmospheric aplomb. One particular moment in the newborn baby ward will be talked about for years to come.

But what’s most impressive is – even if you’ve played the original to death (pun intended) – you can almost never tell where Visceral’s scare snares are placed. Most of them are the classic ‘jack-in-the-box’ devices and are done so masterfully, even the sun will manage to scare you at one point. There’s also have a slew of new necromorph types that’ll keep you thinking tactically and shaking in your space boots. Our personal ‘favourite’ is the velociraptor-



We hope that suit has a **fart filtration system**



HUD on your back? **Learn contortionism**

Play this
if you like

Dead Space, Resident Evil 4

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: VISCERAL
GAMES

PLAYERS: 1-8

RRP: \$109.95

My bad...

A fair amount of the tension now comes from not just the things that happen to Isaac, but the unfortunate things that happen to the hapless NPCs.

There are quite a few moments in *Dead Space 2* when you're placed in a hopeless position while somebody screams at you to help them.

These are the moments that will stick with you.

Final Say

PRESENTATION

Environments that consistently ooze atmosphere and some truly grotesque enemies and situations.

SOUND An auditory tour de force. This game is why God made Dolby 7.1. Isaac with a voice works just fine.

CONTROLS Isaac feels a bit nimbler as a plasmaslinger but can feel needlessly sluggish when snuck up on.

REPLAY VALUE Multiplayer is a flawed bonus, but it has potential and could feasibly be fixed.

Verdict

Well worth the price of admission to earn yourself a seat. But you'll really only need the edge of it.

9

type. These buggers hunt so intelligently in packs, you'll catch yourself mumbling "clever girl" in appreciation, moments before they attack from your peripheral and unzip you.

Obviously the idea is still to prune off your enemy's limbs before that can happen – and *DS2* offers some cool new ways to do it. Some standouts include the Seeker Rifle (read: sniper), the Detonator (mine layer with retrievable mines) and a Javelin Gun (impale necros to the wall and electrocute them remotely). They're all worthy additions, but it's unfortunate that you're still railroaded into picking two, maybe three, favourites to upgrade and stick with. We think weapon diversity should be encouraged, but it simply isn't here.

However, we do appreciate that Isaac doesn't rely heavily on actual military hardware. You still feel like you're being resourceful with tools that anyone could pick up at Future Space Bunnings. Stasis (the ability to slow-mo enemies) and Kinesis (chuck stuff with your mind) make a return, plus Isaac's melee stomp and arm swing

are much more effective. Last but not least, the Zero Gravity controls have been greatly improved upon the last game, allowing you to fly and fire with ease.

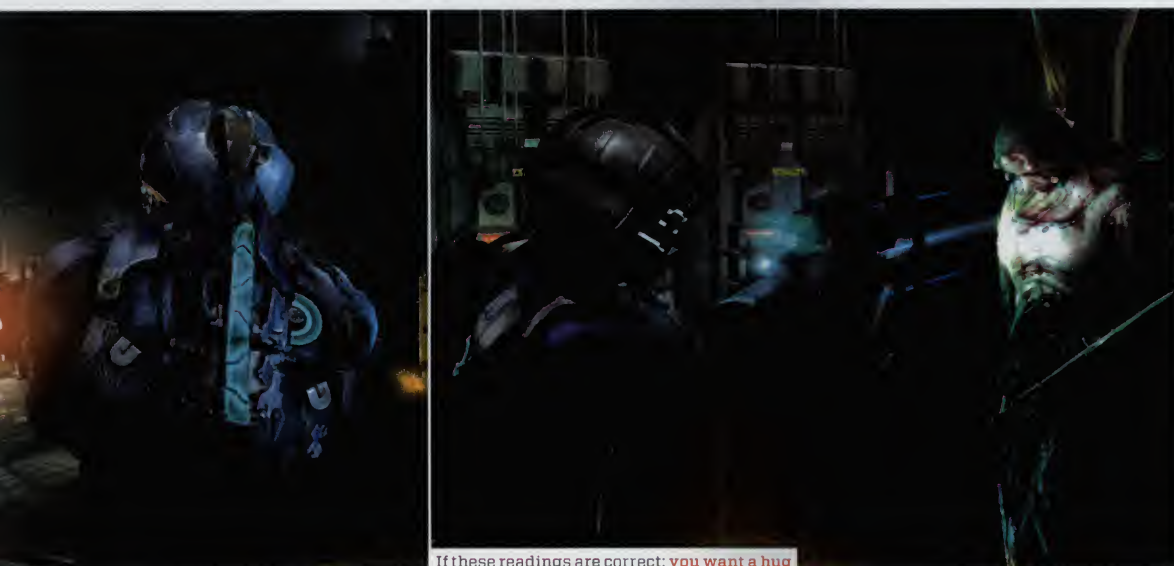
On paper, the biggest new addition to the formula is *DS2*'s objective based multiplayer mode. Taking on the role of either a team of up to four Sprawl Security Officers or a pack of up to four Necromorph players, one group must arm a powerful bomb, while the other need to crack open skulls and feast on the delicious goo inside. We'll let you decide which one is which.

From what we played of it, the teams are pretty damned unbalanced at the lower end of the 60 level system. Security Officers get all the cool weapons, but Necromorphs can spawn quicker from any vent in the map in a variety of forms, and they can often kill in a heartbeat. So, really, your two outcomes of any match will either be a landslide victory (boredom), or a pummelling (frustration). With patching *DS2* multiplayer could be salvaged, but until then there just isn't enough fun or variation here to prevent the lobbies from ending up like empty derelicts.

Much of the problem the humans have in multiplayer – and this is an issue in the single-player too – lies in the inability to quickly react to threats from behind. The close camera works great for enhancing tension, but in single-player the necros are slotted in behind you quite cheaply; something the original tried to avoid. We're all for being surrounded, but not having a means to about-face quickly can get irritating. *DS2* would have benefited greatly from the 'instant 180 degree turn' option seen in *Resident Evil 5* or Valve's *Left 4 Dead* series.

Beyond a few minor niggles, *Dead Space 2* is still a nerve-shredding success of a sequel. It has a distinctly different flavour to the first (thanks to human NPCs everywhere and a protagonist who is no longer a mime), but while that robs the formula of some eerie isolation, it makes up for it with far richer storytelling. There are quite a few loose ends when the credits roll. We can't wait to see how *Dead Space 3* will wrap this epic up.

Adam Mathew



If these readings are correct: you want a hug

Play this if you like

IL-2 Sturmovik:
Birds of Prey,
Nuclear Strike

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: FLIGHT

RELEASE: MARCH 28
2011

DISTRIBUTOR:

ACTIVISION

DEVELOPER: GAIJIN
ENTERTAINMENT

PLAYERS: 1-4

RRP: \$79.95

Improvising AA defenses, the
insurgents fed Panadol to seagulls

Apache: Air Assault

Cue The Ride of the Valkyries

Gaijin's *Apache: Air Assault* sounds like your usual budget-priced supermarket sausage, right down to its fatally generic title. Consider, however, the fact that this Moscow-based studio was also behind *IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey* – the best flight game on any current generation console.

Apache doesn't reach the lofty heights of its winged predecessor but it performs well enough.

The nature of *Apache's* gameplay is easy to describe: hover around destroying everything on the ground (or in the air) that shoots back. If we could've seen *Apache* when we were hooked on *Nuclear Strike* over 10 years ago we would've drilled holes through our pants. A lot's changed since then, though, and *Apache's* simple shooting gallery style is a bit basic in 2011.

Still, it does it well and it looks good. Some of the weapon impact effects are a little underwhelming but the (admittedly few) helicopter models boast loads of detail.

Apache comes with two distinct flight models. The first, Training, is straightforward and accessible. Your Apache will only be able to pitch and roll to a set level so you'll

generally feel in control of your momentum and trajectory. The Training setting is where most players will feel comfortable.

The Realistic setting is a different story, designed exclusively for helo-heads with a garage full of chopper posters and a face full of whiskers. Apaches have rigid blades, so in real life they can perform loops and barrel rolls – something beyond the capabilities of most helicopters. Thus, on the realistic setting your digital Apache can be manipulated into a number of absurdly dangerous manoeuvres. You need to utilise far more finesse to effectively control your chopper on realistic difficulty and deal with a variety of physical factors, like inertia, that are all conspiring to snare a cheque from your ego that your body can't cash.

In this way it's not unlike *Birds of Prey*, having two very different models means *Apache* can satiate the hardcore without alienating softies.

Combat mostly boils down to launching barrages of missiles towards your enemies though, like the AC-130 gunships you've seen in both *Call of Duty 4* and *H.A.W.X. 2*, Apaches also have a ground-facing camera the crew can use to control the gun turret

SLAVE 4 U

What *Apache: Air Assault* could've done with was a gimmick; something to give it some spark. Perhaps with the right development resources we could've seen some PS Eye support. One of the cool features of the Apache is its Integrated Helmet and Display Sighting System, which allows the pilot to slave the chopper's chain gun to his or her helmet and make the gun track head movements. It's also the possibly the largest helmet we've seen this side of *Spaceballs*.



and zoom. Using thermal vision you can seek out human targets and provide close ground support for troops on the ground.

There are a handful of modes, but online multiplayer is more fun than both the offline single-player and co-op. Online you'll be able to work together with human wingmen. Local co-op, on the other hand, sees to players sharing the same screen and splits flying and shooting duties between them. In Gaijin's defence it's not an option it could've ignored, but it turned out to be a little dull regardless.

Still, it's hard to imagine casual types persisting with *Apache* for too long. It's certainly good enough for a game of its ilk but, once the novelty of pounding the ground wears thin, that's it. With just a single type of helicopter available it lacks the variety you get in most other air combat sims.

We can't quite see why, after the extraordinarily good *Birds of Prey*, Gaijin decided to make such a focused follow-up over something that covered a broader range of modern aircraft types and combat. We know Gaijin could do it and, if *Birds of Prey* is any indication, it would've been better than the *H.A.W.X.* series.

▀ Luke Reilly

Final Say

PRESENTATION A little vanilla by and large, but the detail in the titular choppers is impressive.

SOUND The lack of a lengthy score means the little music the game has is repeated ad nauseam.

CONTROLS Caters for both casual and hardcore flight fans.

REPLAY VALUE You may find yourself draw back to one or two missions but overall it's repetitive.

Verdict

A competent aerial blaster, unique among the very few flight sims on PS3, but it's lacking zest.

7



"Engage target" "Negative sir, we've only just met"

Play this if
you like

Lost Planet 2

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

DEVELOPER: FEELPLUS

PLAYERS: 1-6

RRP: \$69.95

The future will rule your brain via cyber bee hives

MindJack

Check your brain at the door

We thought the title *MindJack* was an oxymoronic proposition: a cerebral task that's also a masturbatory waste of time. Be that as it may, we soon learned that what we really had in front of us was a clunky, generic third-person shooter whose one defining feature is the ability to commandeer someone else's cranium.

Set in the near-future, *MindJack* tells the poorly-acted tale of Jim and Rebecca; two fugitives making a very linear escape from government forces through some of the blandest, sterile environments engineered by the hand of man. There's a conspiracy plot to follow here, but it's hard to become engaged when the banter is so inane and the cutscenes deliberately hide the face of the person talking (to conceal the muppet lip-synch, you see). This has all the telltale signs of a hasty Japanese port.

Much like *Lost Planet 2*, *MindJack* is actually a multiplayer game masquerading as a single-player experience. *MindJack*'s designers have created a co-op/adversarial hybrid which allows you to fight alongside your human buddies, or 'hack' into a random person's singleplayer game and take control of their AI enemies. You can do this by casting your consciousness into another person, or you can incapacitate an AI soldier (after half a dozen shots to the head) and then 'mindslave' them into turning against their allies. Allowing intrusion can be disabled. Which begs the question: why then would you allow it?

But there are other, more important questions than this. *MindJack* is quite a

drab action-shooter that sports anaemic guns, some of dopest AI this side of the *GTA/IV* drinking mini-game, and annoying, stop-start levels that only last a couple of minutes at a time. Even with an XP system and perks to earn, how can an experience this frustrating ever hope to attract an active multiplayer community to make it slightly more appealing?

MindJack also plays host to a litany of bugs and bizarre design decisions. There are times when you'll peep at enemies from a doorway only to have your big rectangular ammo counter sit over your crosshairs. The start of every single-player level busts you down to a pistol. And why the hell there isn't a quick menu to let you switch your perks on the fly (instead of closing connection and quitting right out to the main menu) is a *mindjack* in and of itself.



"Care to pull my trigger?" "Is your safety on?"

Feelplus has been so single-minded in their efforts to create a unique drop-in/out multiplayer concept, they forgot the importance of welding it onto a single-player game that's worth replaying and buddy-ing up for in the first place. And without other humans running through your game, helping, hindering – or just making things interesting at all – you're stuck playing a mind-numbing shell of a game. Or, as the case will be, not playing it.

Adam Mathew



Hopes do not get much higher than this man's

Final Say

PRESENTATION Dreary level designs and samey enemies rendered through a drab *Minority Report* palette of greys and blues.

SOUND Phoned in VO and characters with all the emotional range of dead ants.

CONTROLS Functional shooting but the process of switching consciousness is needlessly slow and disorientating.

REPLAY VALUE 50 levels and perks to gain but once through the game earns half of that.

Verdict

Generic solo. Marginally better in multi. Meh.

4

▶ WHAT'S NEW

PSN DEVELOPMENTS

What you can expect to see and play on the PSN

Big month for *Call of Duty*, as *Black Ops* receives its first load of DLC with new multiplayer content called *First Strike*, which delivers four brand new multiplayer maps and a fresh Zombie map. From the top, 'Berlin Wall', set in the area surrounding the Berlin Wall. The Checkpoint Charlie level has access to both sides of Cold War Berlin and shows off the difference between Western and Communist ideology. Seems to be ideal for snipers, too.

'Stadium' is a US sports complex featuring a hockey stadium, promising fast paced, close quarters battles which the developers say will benefit from Tactical Insertion. The third map 'Discovery' is an abandoned German outpost set along the coast of Antarctica, and judging from the screenshot also has weird light shows. There's a massive chasm that separates the two sides of the map with destructible bridges between them.

The last of the regular maps is 'Kowloon', spanning tiered levels across high-rises and rooftops of Kowloon City in Hong Kong. Thematically similar to the level from the single-player campaign it's been built from the ground up for multiplayer. It's also the only level featuring ziplines for quick access to other rooftops. Finally, the zombie map 'Ascension' is where – and we'll quote the press release directly as there's no way we could make this up – "you must fight perk-stealing monkeys and new zombies in an abandoned Soviet cosmodrome". Yes.

Finally, PSN Plus Subscribers can expect this grab bag of offers during February. As usual, it's not the final list so

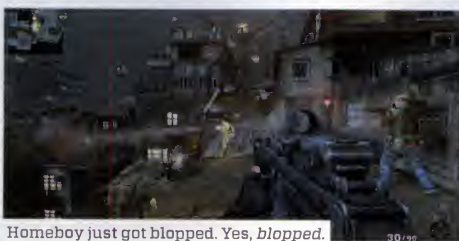


SABOTAGE
Letting ol' painless off the leash

check back online for more.

PSN:

- Magician Lord (new to PSN)
- Mushroom Wars minis: Brand New mini – Karimogi (2 weeks early, exclusively for Plus)
- Breakquest
- Exclusive Discounts: PlayTV Live Chat (25% off) – valid until 6th July 2011
- Crash Bandicoot (PS One) – 50% off
- Flow (PSP) – 25% off
- I Must Run – 50% off
- Flight Control HD – 40% off
- Worms: Battle Island – 50% off
- Exclusive Demo: Wheels of Destruction
- Dynamic Themes: Exclusive Cloud Theme
- Exclusive PSN Wave Theme
- Premium Avatars: echochrome Avatars



Homeboy just got blopped. Yes, blopped.

VIDZONE CHANNEL SPOTLIGHT

THIS MONTH: 80s



DAVID BOWIE - FASHION

Pretty people simultaneously lip-synching and blinking at the same time. That chorus will be stuck in your head.



THE CLASH - COMPLETE CONTROL

A composite of gigs and fervent fans rioting, this is energetic, British rock at a time when skinny leg jeans were ok.



MADNESS - THE SUN AND THE RAIN

Just one slice of Madness' absurd, infectious tunes that will leave you with a smile. Silly songs, but well crafted.

VidZone is the largest online music video VOD service in the world, and it's available **free** on PS3. Download the vidzone application and you'll have access to over 13,000 music videos at the push of a button!



PlayStation®Network

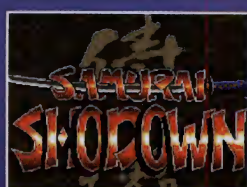
ESSENTIAL DOWNLOADS

ANGRY BIRDS



It's been out on iPhone for a while and now you this pig- and building-smashing game is on your PSP and PS3. Simple. Addictive.

SAMURAI SHODOWN



Gloriously pretty, we have fond memories of pumping 20c coins into the arcade feeding our addiction.

ASSASSIN'S CREED ASCENDANCE



A short, animated film that fills in the story between *Assassin's Creed II* and the latest, *Brotherhood*.

ROCK BAND 3 JOHNNY CASH PACK 01



The Man in Black has his own posthumous collection, with 'I Walk The Line' being a standout in the eight, available for \$16.45.

TETRIS



This joins *Pac-Man* as a surprising, refreshing take on a classic. A touch expensive, but it favours online competition.

WHAT IS PSN?

The PlayStation Network (PSN) is free to join and free to play. No subscription is required to play online. You'll be able to communicate with friends, access the PlayStation Store and download demos, add-ons, trailers, PSN games, PSone classics and blockbuster movies!



PlayStation®Network



Gillette: the closest shave a man can get

GENRE: ACTION **RELEASE:** NOW **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT **DEVELOPER:** UBISOFT MONTREAL **PLAYERS:** 1 - 8 **RRP:** \$109.95

Multiplayer > Assassin's Creed Brotherhood

Home of the nice slice

When in Rome, make like the locals. In this case; masquerade as a prostitute, pack a shiv if you want to live and flat-out assume every haystack doesn't hide a pitchfork. Or horse crap.

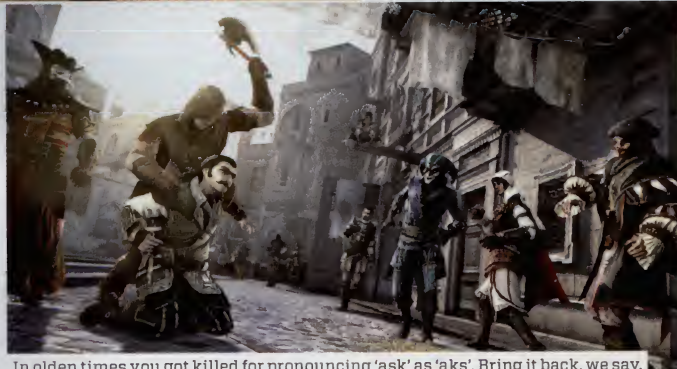
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood has an online component that drops eight ninjas into downtown renaissance Rome, but it's not an experience for everybody's taste.

If your familiarity with the word 'guile' begins and ends with the *Street Fighter* character, you're already dead. But if you are a fiendish type who favours a bit of stalking, *Brotherhood's*

multiplayer has the potential to keep you occupied and out of jail for a while.

Though there are a few modes that are a variation on a theme (cat and mouse killing, alone or in pairs), the 6-8 player 'Wanted' is the best of the bunch. It's deathmatch with a twist: you have a specific target to terminate and a random third-party also wants to use your pancreas as a pincushion.

With a medium-sized borough full of NPCs walking around, you're given the general whereabouts of your prey but you'll need to chameleon with the crowd to mask your approach. Run straight at your prey like a git and they'll



In olden times you got killed for pronouncing 'ask' as 'aks'. Bring it back, we say.

drop a smoke bomb, escape and earn points for making you look foolish. Use a bit of foreplay and you'll be fine.

Honestly, the rush of escaping is just as satisfying as the thrill of the kill itself. It's also quite heart-warming to see that the impatient, twitch player will almost always be out-witted and annihilated by the shrewd strategist. If you're the former personality type, you'll break controllers playing this. If you're the latter, enjoy your long-awaited revenge.

VERDICT

Keep a shrewd head on your shoulders, pay heed to the tactics and this is multiplayer that's well worth a stab.



PlayStation®Network

BEST GAMES TO PLAY ONLINE



CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS

DEVELOPER: TREYARCH
PLAYERS: 1-16

Take MW2, and add in some insanely addictive contracts and inventive modes in the multiplayer proper. However, we especially like playing Zombies with a skilled compatriot.



RED DEAD REDEMPTION

DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO **PLAYERS:** 1-16

The connection issues that bothered us are well and truly fixed, so there's no excuse not to jump on, form a posse and start hunting for challengers. Much better as a co-op experience.



SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PLAYERS: 1-4

It's like being in the arcades (remember those?) when you had a bunch of lads and lasses hanging around, marvelling at your quarter-circle technique. Champagne gaming.



FIFA 11

DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS
PLAYERS: 1-22

Shooters aren't the only games that need explicit tactics, and the beautiful game is remarkably brilliant with 11 versus 11 matches. It's still as compelling and smooth as last year's effort. Get on it right now.



BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2

DEVELOPER: DICE
PLAYERS: 1-16

You'll be won over by the chaotic destruction and storming in to an enemy base on the back of a quad bike. You'll stay for the tactics. Team matches have little room for lone wolves.



'Stop, drop and roll' isn't going to help this guy

GENRE: FPS RELEASE: NOW DISTRIBUTOR: EA DEVELOPER: DICE PLAYERS: 2-24 RRP: \$19.95

Multiplayer > Battlefield: Bad Company 2 Vietnam

I love the smell of napalm in the morning...

Considering *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* released March last year, the fact that it is still filled with rabid fans trying to frag the competition, take that flag or destroy that M-com station is impressive. DICE has continued to support its release with no less than seven free map packs, but now, you pay. It's time to take it back a notch, before C4, sensor balls and the wonderful Carl Gustav taught you how to make tanks go boom. Goodbye *Modern Warfare* and gooood morning Vietnam!

Sometimes it's the little things that make all the difference. Tiny things that fit in the palm of your hand, but without them, your world takes on a whole new dimension. It's all about perspective. The biggest shift is the loss of red-dot and 4X zoom scopes. In fact, only Recon sniper rifles have access to them, and it's a welcome change. No longer will you be picked off by a Medic half a map away. Vietnam is gritty, down and dirty and we wouldn't have it any other way.

As you take your iron sights for a spin, you'll quickly discover this new expansion has leveled the playing field. From the get-go all weapons, vehicles and attachments are unlocked and available to all. Ranking no longer matters, just skill and how nimble your itchy trigger finger is. Everything in your arsenal is period specific, with AK-47s, M16s, UZIs, M60s and the like. Your toys have

been stripped back to bare basics, and it's a welcome change.

Each map is wildly different, with most (barring Phu Bai Valley which is mostly flat) funnelling troops down trenches, past scorched earth from napalm or picturesque rice paddy fields to choke points, high ground battles or through tunnels to objectives. There's thick brush, ample ambush positions and most often line of sight is broken leading to violent skirmishes erupting at any given moment, both heightening the tension and leaving you always on your toes.

Reinforcing the tone are the battle-worn character and weapon models and the constant classic rock blaring through Hanoi Hannah speakers or when you commandeer vehicles. Creedence's *Fortunate Son* does get overworked a little, but it's nigh impossible to force back a grin as you lay waste in a UH-1 Huey to the Budapest Symphony Orchestra's rendition of *The Ride of the Valkyries*. Classic stuff.

But it's not all peaches and cream. Thanks to the n00bifying of explosives, vehicles can be particularly troublesome. UH-1 Hueys are susceptible to regular gunfire, counteracting the need for tracer darts, but tanks can be a handful. The balancing seems just a little off, and barring the use of TNT, (man vs. tank is a risky venture at the best of times) you'll need at

"Your toys have been stripped back to bare basics, and it's a welcome change"

least three rockets to get the job done. You just seem to be getting a bit less bang for your buck.

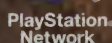
All in all though, for less than 20 hard-earned you get five maps (now that the free Operation Hastings map has been unlocked), 15 weapons and countless hours of visceral and frantic fire fights, and that's a pretty hard deal to resist now, innit? **Dave Kozicki**

VERDICT

More than an expansion, yet with a completely different flavour. A solid shooter in its own right, newbies could also enjoy this.



The definition of 'point blank range'



FREE* to join
to play

[illegible]

Can you handle the most insane, adrenaline pumping experience of your life on the streets of an earthquake ravaged metropolis? Do you have the guts to battle crazy drivers and push the pedal to the metal under collapsing buildings, over twisting bridges and through crumbling subways? As the world ends, the race begins - this isn't just about winning, it's about surviving!

PG

Mild violence, themes and gambling references; Caution: Gaming experience may change online

3D
Compatible
Game

MARCH 2011
motorstorm.com



PSB

PlayStation 3

SONY
make.believe

► PHOTOMODE TIPS


Gran Turismo 5


Take a picture; it'll last longer! Don't know one end of a camera from the other? Consult our in-depth guide and you'll be snapping stunning shots like a pro in no time! Too easy.

Getting started


Photo Travel Pre-Aim


Once you've selected your location you'll be asked to choose where your camera will be placed. These are just general suggestions – you can freely move it after. Next, you'll place the car, which can also be moved later.

After you've placed both you'll be able to move and look around manually. The 'Car Positioning Map' can be accessed by pressing  and allows you to move and rotate the car, angle your car's wheels and activate the lights (off, sidelights, low beam, or high beam).

Once you decided on your car placement and general shooting location hit  to aim the camera.

Replay Photomode Pre-Aim

Once your race, time trial or free-run is over trigger the replay. When you reach the precise moment you want to capture, press . Get it right because there's no rewind function; miss your moment and you'll need to start the replay all over again from the beginning. At the bottom right will be a button marked Photomode. Click it and you'll enter the same free-roaming camera as you have in Photo Travel. Keep an eye on the top right corner because you may have other cameras available. These will be fixed but will usually offer views otherwise not available with the free camera. The number of cameras varies depending on the circuit and what part of it you're on.

When you're ready, hit  to aim your camera.

Panning

This setting is available only in Replay Photomode.



▲ **Mode 1:** The camera stays in a fixed position and turns to follow the car. Because the car's distance from the camera varies, this can cause it to blur. This is the default panning mode and it's pretty rubbish if you ask us. Too blurry. If all your photos look crap chances are it's this setting that's doing the damage.



▲ **Mode 2:** The camera moves with the car. When taking a photo of a cornering or spinning car, focus will be centred on the middle of the car, which can cause the front and rear to go slightly out of focus.




▲ **Mode 3:** The camera moves with the car, and is positioned face-on to the front of the vehicle. This allows you to take a photo where the car is sharply in focus, and only the background becomes blurred. This is the one we normally use.

Terminology, tips and examples

Move

Use the left stick to move. You control height with up/down and left/right to move to the sides, but can't easily move forward and back. Back out to 'Camera Positioning' to more easily move forward and back. Up/down on the right stick tilts the camera forward and back.

Zoom/Rotate

Hold  and use the right stick. Zoom in and out with up/down and left/right to tilt side to side.

Parameters

Use the D-Pad to cycle through the basic Shutter Speed, F-Number, and EV settings. These will be explained later.


AE Lock

Locks the level of exposure you currently have set.

Horizontal/Vertical

Twist your SIXAXIS/DS3 around to change the orientation.

Camera Menu

Press  to bring up the detailed camera menu.

Aspect Ratio

Choose one of the available aspect ratios:

- 3:2** - 1620 x 1080 pixels
- 1:1** - 1080 x 1080 pixels
- 1.4:1** - 1570 x 1080 pixels
- 1.6:1** - 1747 x 1080 pixels
- 16:9** - 1920 x 1080 pixels

Filters

Monochrome: Remove colors to produce a black-and-white image.

Extreme Monochrome: Produces the same black-and-white effect as Monochrome, but with sharper blacks.

Sepia: Produces a light brown monochrome image that gives the look of faded black-and-white film.

Cool: Produces an image with a blue tone, and darkens the edges.

Warm: Produces an image with a red tone, and darkens the edges.

Cross-Processing: Deliberately upset the colour balance of the image.

Miniature: Obscure the front and rear of the subject with a lens tilt to give a miniaturising effect.



▲ **Partial Colour:** Make the subject stand out by rendering the area surrounding it in monochrome.

Magnification

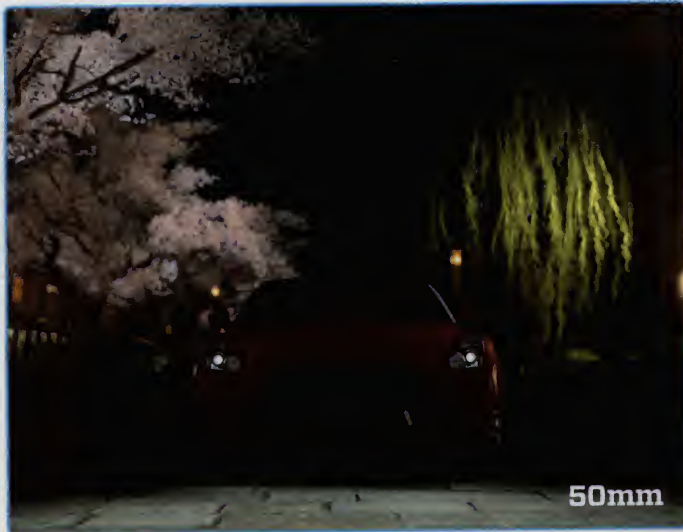
Doubles the pixel count (available in Photo Travel only).

File Type

JPEG or 3D Photo (requires 3D TV to be selected).

Focal Length

The amount of zoom. The focal length of the GT5 camera ranges from 14mm (wide) to 500mm (telephoto). Here's an example of 50mm. Pretty standard.



Anything down around 14mm creates the fisheye effect you often see in skate videos and the like. Kind of cool.



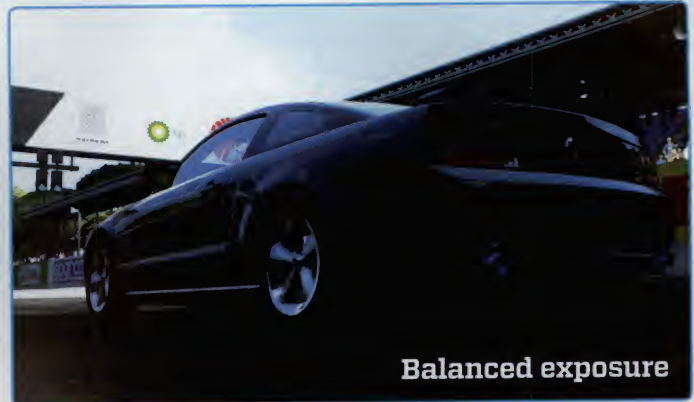
Experiment with different focal lengths and your f/ settings to take great looking shots.

Exposure

Control how light or dark you want your shot to be. Here's a shot of a black car in shadow.



Crank up the EV and you'll be able to make out more details. Lighter areas like sky can and will become washed out, however. Use the AE Lock to lock exposure to what you're pointing to at the time and you'll be able to move the camera around without it auto-adjusting.



F-Number

The effective Depth of Field (DoF). A smaller F-Number will have only a small portion of the image in focus, the higher number will have more.





It's personal preference really. We prefer the first image.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why are there two Photomodes? What's the difference?

Photo Travel features a number of fixed locations from around the world where you can take shots of static cars. Replay Photomode allows you to shoot your cars in motion. Only Premium models can be used in Photo Travel. Both Premium and Standard models can be shot in Replay Photomode. Unfortunately, there are limits to how close you can stand to Standard models, and how far you can zoom in on them. Standard models cannot withstand the same level of scrutiny as their Premium peers.

Q: How do I get my pictures off my PS3 to share elsewhere?

Simply save an image after you've taken it and *GT5* will store it in the Photo Album on the main GT Life page. View the images in your Photo Album and hit  for the menu. Click Export to XMB to make them available for USB transfer from the XMB. When you're viewing the images in the XMB, hit  to bring up the menu and select Copy Multiple. Select the images you plan on transferring and start the process. When you get a prompt asking about a file already existing, select Rename All.

Q: Are 3D images possible?

Yes, but you need a 3D-capable TV. So unless you're Bruce Wayne or the heir to a whole mess of oil money you'll have to be satisfied with just two dimensions for now.

Q: Am I able to open the doors, bonnet or boot of cars in Photo Travel?

Not at this stage, although we've been sent some tips to glitch the camera and shoot the interiors of the game's stunning Premium models. It's surprisingly that so much detail may go unseen unless Polyphony Digital introduces a proper tool for taking pics from inside the vehicles.

Q: Are we able to rewind or fast-forward replays?

Not currently, even though the ability to do so would make taking great racing pictures a whole lot easier. We're not sure why function isn't supported but we hope it's brought in.

Q: How do I unlock all the Travel locations?

Bern: Market Street (available immediately), Ahrweiler: Town Square (available immediately), Ahrweiler: Street (AMG Driving Academy Easy – All Bronze), Ahrweiler: Gate (AMG Driving Academy Easy – All Silver), Ahrweiler: Winter (AMG Driving Academy Easy – All Gold), Kyoto: Gion (available immediately), Kyoto: Shoren-in (complete Japanese Classics in A-spec and B-spec), San Galgano Abbey (complete four Grand Tour Events), San Gimignano: Town Square (complete three Grand Tour events), Siena: Piazza del Campo (complete two Grand Tour events), Red Bull Hangar-7 (available immediately), Lucerne: Chapel Bridge (complete one Grand Tour Event).

Shutter Speed

In *GT5*, shutter speed affects the amount of motion blur in the image. In Photo Travel this will be seen in the background commotion; on the track, it can show movement of cars and wheels more effectively to bring the sense of speed. The range in-game is 1 second to as fast as 1/8000th of a second. Replay Photomode is not capable of anything slower than 1/60.

It's important because shutter speed will determine how movement looks in your images. This is important when it comes to racing photos since you want the car to look like it's moving.



▲ 1/60 Shutter Speed Nice movement; the wheels are a blur and the ripple strip is whipping by.



▲ 1/250 Shutter Speed Still a sense of movement, more detail can be seen but it's still fuzzy.



▲ 1/1000 Shutter Speed The car doesn't look like it's moving at all; it looks like it's parked on the track.

Auto Focus

Force the camera to focus on whatever the cross-hairs are currently pointed at. Once focused, you can alter the composition of the photo but the target will remain the main focal point.

Here's an example of bad focus. The plane is sharp and sexy but the car is an absolute mess.



Much better.



General Tips

Interior Shots

In two Photo Travel locations *GT5* users have discovered the ability to take shots of the incredibly detailed interiors. Specifically these are Kapellbrücke: Luzern Chapel Bridge (location #2 & #4) and Siena: Piazza del Campo.

Position your car with the desired side you want to shoot and walk as close to the car as you can. Set your F-Number to maximum so there is no blur effect. Then simply level your camera to the height of the window, and zoom in.

Here's an example we've been sent.



Rule of Thirds

Don't put your car dead centre; it's boring. The Rule of Thirds encourages you to divide each of your frames up into nine equal segments and place the subject where the lines intersect.



There'll be four points where the lines cross. Placing your target on these points makes for far sexier shots.



See how shifting the subject in the frame makes for much more interesting pics?

Still, placing your subject smack dab in the centre can look great too if you use the background to your advantage.



See? Now start shooting! 📷

► MUST WATCH

Buried (MA15+)

DIRECTOR: RODRIGO CORTES **CAST:** RYAN REYNOLDS, SAMANTHA MATHIS, STEPHEN TOBOLOWSKYS
AVAILABLE ON: BLU-RAY, DVD

Waking groggy in pitch darkness, Paul Conroy (Reynolds), an American truck driver working as a contractor in Iraq in 2006, finds himself trapped inside a wooden coffin. Buried alive.

Armed with nothing more than a lighter and a working cellphone, Conroy must rally some rescuers. But when the outside world proves to be not very helpful at finding a man buried in a box in the middle of the Iraqi desert, Paul must instead rely upon his best resource – himself and his wits.

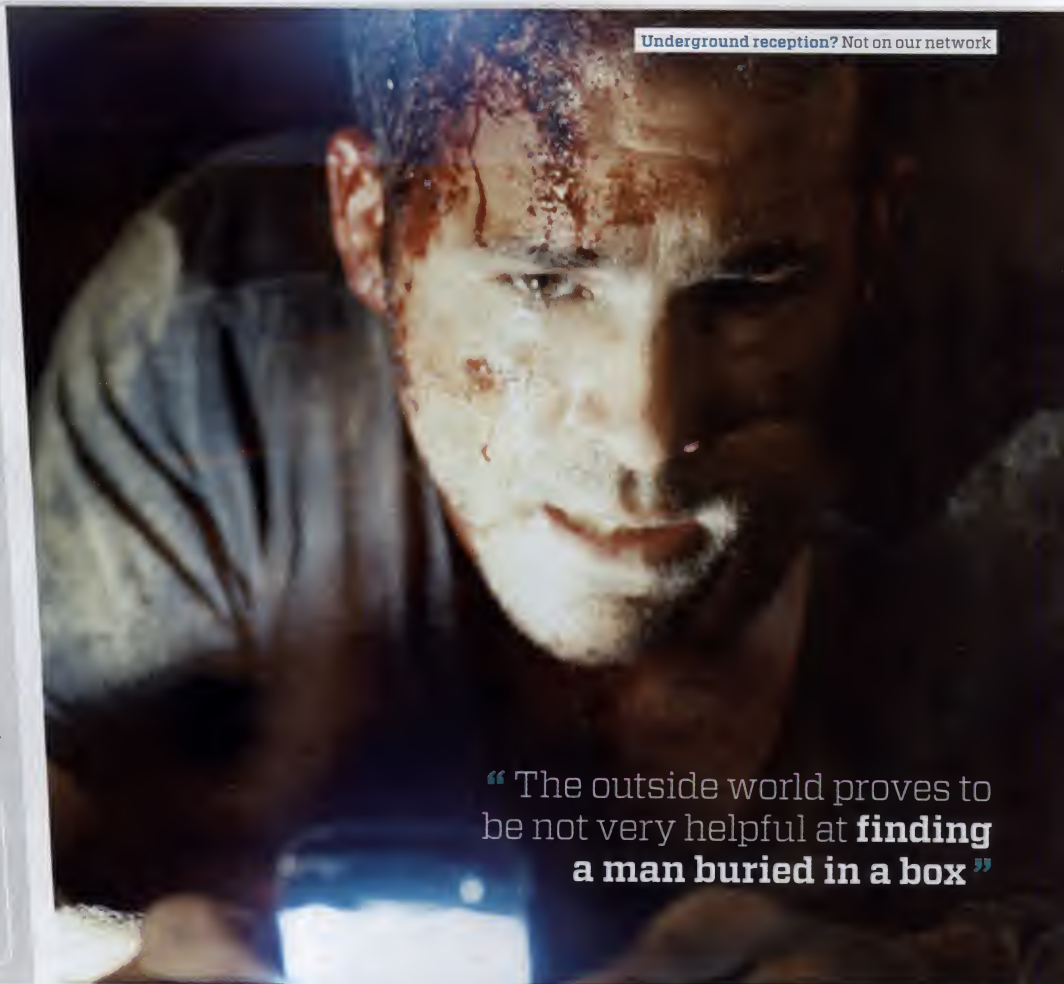
Reynolds does an excellent job of playing the wrong-place-at-the-wrong-time everyman that you can empathise with. Likewise, Cortes is clearly a man who can direct himself out of any box. This is a minimalist thriller that proves that less really can be more, and it has one of the most tense movie endings in recent years.

This is edge of your seat stuff that should not be missed. We dug it.

Watch this if you like *Phonebooth* or the feeling of not being able to breathe

Verdict This has Hitchcock levels of sustained tension and more claustrophobia than playing hide and seek in a fridge. Brutally intense and bleak stuff.

9



“The outside world proves to be not very helpful at **finding a man buried in a box**”



Salt (PG)

DIRECTOR PHILLIP NOYCE **CAST** ANGELINA JOLIE, LIEV SCHREIBER, CHIWETEL EJIOFOR
AVAILABLE (OWN) \$24.99, 1191MB (SD) - \$32.99, 4316MB (HD)

Evelyn Salt is a CIA agent and highly respected by all, including her boss, Ted Winter. Out of the blue, a Russian spy walks into their offices and tells them that the President of Russia will be assassinated. The name of the assassin: Evelyn Salt.

Concerned about the safety of her husband, who she cannot contact, she goes on the run. Winter refuses to believe she is a double agent but her actions begin to raise doubts. Just who is Evelyn Salt?

We'll tell you who she isn't: a Jason-Bourne-killer. *Salt*

offers okay action, but the plot is frequently ludicrous and brimming with bad Russian stereotypes.

Watch this if you liked *Tomb Raider*

Verdict An ordinary attempt at making Jennifer Bourne. Also, silliest undercover headware, ever.

6

PlayStation®Store

► TOP TEN

Movies on Demand



- 1 **The Expendables** Roadshow
- 2 **Scott Pilgrim vs. The World** Universal
- 3 **Inception** Warner Bros.
- 4 **Death Race 2** Universal
- 5 **Grown Ups** Sony
- 6 **Killers** Lionsgate
- 7 **Get Him to the Greek** Universal
- 8 **Predators** Fox
- 9 **Jonah Hex** Warner Bros.
- 10 **Knight and Day** Fox

Source: au.playstation.com

Now available to rent or own on PlayStation®Store

The PlayStation Network Video Store offers hundreds of titles available to rent or own at the click of a button!



The Ghost Writer

(MA15+)

DIRECTORS: ROMAN POLANSKI **CAST:** EWAN MCGREGOR, KIM CATTRALL, PIERCE BROSNAN
AVAILABLE ON: BLU-RAY, DVD

Following the mysterious death of an acclaimed ghost writer, a replacement writer is sent to an isolated compound to pen the memoirs of a former prime minister, and unknowingly becomes embroiled in a high stakes, international conspiracy.

Resonating with topical themes, this is an atmospheric and suspenseful political thriller with a story of deceit and betrayal on every level – sexual, political, and literary. In a world in which nothing, and no one, is as it seems, *The Ghost* quickly discovers that the past can be deadly – and that history is decided by whoever stays alive to write it.

Speaking of writing; whoever penned this rode the very edge of plausibility in some spots.

Watch this if you like *Secret Agent Tony Blair*

Verdict Part detective story part political thriller, *The Ghost Writer* is a slow burn read.

7



The Crow

(MA15+)

DIRECTOR: ALEX PROYAS **CAST:** BRANDON LEE, ERNIE HUDSON, MICHAEL WINCOTT **AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY, DVD

There is a legend that when a soul can't rest, a crow can bring that soul back from the dead, to seek justice and make the wrong things right. In the film which cost him his life, martial arts phenomenon Brandon Lee stars as a superhuman mystical hero who returns from the grave to exact revenge on the killers of his fiancée and himself.

Yes the movie is dated, but this is still a terrific ride. Brandon Lee's untimely death earns his war-painted character an eerieness that makes him both riveting to watch and reminiscent of Heath Ledger's Joker.

Visually, *The Crow* is a treat; particularly the well crafted baddies. The action scenes, though a touch darker and blurrier than we remembered, still pack a satisfying punch.

Watch this if you like *The Dark Knight* or cutting yourself just to feel something

Verdict A gritty comic book adaptation that was years ahead of the curve. Very re-watchable.

9



Curb Your Enthusiasm Season 7

(MA15+)

DIRECTOR: LARRY DAVID **CAST:** LARRY DAVID, JERRY SEINFELD, MEG RYAN **AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY, DVD

In Season 7 Larry contemplates his future with an ailing Loretta and decides on a novel approach to winning back Cheryl. In addition to Larry finding himself embroiled in usual cauldron of self-made crises he orchestrates a (much anticipated) reunion with the entire cast of *Seinfeld*.

Just seeing the quartet together again is enough to have our enthusiasm rewarded. Larry David takes us to some soaring heights and the darkest depths of the inner struggle of all humans to do good... at no expense to ourselves.

Watch this if you like episodes of *Seinfeld* or Jerry's Greater Building Society TV ads

Verdict As always, Larry David excels at turning the little things in life into big things

8



The Venture Bros. Season 04 Part 1

(MA15+)

DIRECTOR: JACKSON PUBLICK **CAST:** PATRICK WARBURTON, JAMES URBANIAK, MICHAEL SINTERNIKAAS **AVAILABLE ON:** DVD

To be blunt, this isn't exactly the best starting-off point for exploring the depraved and hilarious world of *The Venture Bros.* With a rollicking pace and a mini-series-like plot structure, season four all but abandons any pretence of this being a series of discrete, easily digestible episodes. But for those already well-versed in the rivalry between the super-villain known as The Monarch and washed-up mad scientist Rusty Venture, your investment will be repaid in flashbacks, character development, swearing, murder, and even more jokes about pederasts.

Watch this if you like *Jonny Quest* and beautiful sublime failure.

Verdict Eight uncensored episodes of retro sci-fi, espionage, satire, angst, pathos, and robots.

8



Kenichi: the Mightiest Disciple, Collection 1

(M)

DIRECTOR: HAJIME KAMEGAKI **CAST:** TOMOKAZU SEKI, TOMOKO KAWAKAMI **AVAILABLE ON:** DVD

Wary of a lifetime of suffering through bullying and humiliation, high school freshman Kenichi vows to turn his life around through mastery of karate. The new girl in class takes a liking to our underdog hero, and introduces him to some eccentric and borderline psychotic martial arts grand masters. As the slapstick training montages accrue, little by little, Kenichi grows not just in strength, but in stature.

Watch this if you like *The Karate Kid* series, skintight purple unitards

Verdict Wears the trappings of titillation and vulgarity, but it also has a sense of humanity.

7



Xam'd: Lost Memories, Collection 1

(M)

DIRECTOR: MASAYUKI MIYAJI **CAST:** ATSUSHI ABE, YUKO SANPEI, FUMIKO ORIKASA **AVAILABLE ON:** DVD

An exquisitely animated ensemble piece set that borrows heavily from such classics of the genre as *Nausicaa*, and *The Wings of Honneamise*. After getting caught up in a freakish bio-mechanical suicide bombing attack, high school slacker Akiyuki becomes one with the "Xam'd," a robot battle suit he can summon from a gem embedded in his arm. As he travels on a postal service airship staffed by boorish eccentrics, he must struggle with super powers that could kill him, and learn a deeper truth: if you don't stop and think, life tends to kick you in the balls.

Watch this if you like battle suits that look vaguely like Metal Sonic

Verdict Epic steampunk action series set in a lavish art deco world of sci-fi and fantasy.

8

▶ MUST WATCH

The Green Hornet

DIRECTOR: MICHEL GONDRY **CAST:** SETH ROGEN, JAY CHOU, CAMERON DIAZ, TOM WILKINSON, CHRISTOPH WALTZ, EDWARD FURLONG **IN CINEMAS:** NOW

Britt Reid (Rogen) is the slacker, playboy son of a powerful and dominating newspaper publisher (Wilkinson). When his dad suddenly dies, Reid is left in charge of his father's newspaper, the Daily Sentinel. Trying to get out of his father's shadow he discovers Kato (Chou), one of his dad's employees who not only makes an excellent cup of coffee, but also maintained and customised many of the sleek cars left in the garage.

After an incident involving the head of a statue and accidentally foiling a mugging, Reid decides the two should be crime fighters at night – with a twist. They need to appear to be the bad guys so that they can get closer to their underworld prey, but in reality be diffusing crime.

The Green Hornet has received slamming reviews in the States, but we're not sure why. Whether it's true to its roots or not (the franchise began as a radio series, then was a TV show starring Bruce Lee as Kato) doesn't matter too much here, as this is a buddy-cop film that's hilarious in parts and thoroughly action packed. While Gondry doesn't show as much flair as you'd expect, there are some deft touches with the fight scenes that liberally borrow from The Matrix and a hundred different martial arts films, and there's a cool beat at the start where Reid is showing a girl around his massive underground garage.

Admittedly it stalls in places, the 3D treatment is pointless and Rogen's hoarse shouting which is meant to show enthusiasm often grates. However, this is a stylish action movie that's a lot of fun.

Watch this if you like *Kick Ass*, *Sherlock Holmes*



"This is a buddy cop film that's **hilarious in parts and thoroughly action packed**"



"What do you mean you have food envy?"

Black Swan

DIRECTOR: DARREN ARONOFSKY **CAST:** NATALIE PORTMAN, VINCENT CASSEL, MILA KUNIS, BARBARA HERSHEY, WINONA RYDER **IN CINEMAS:** NOW

Nina Sayers (Portman) is a ballerina in the New York City Ballet, and her life like everybody else in this surprisingly dark world revolves around dance. Living with her dominating mother Erica (Hershey), Nina is cast by artistic director Thomas Leroy (Cassel) in an upcoming production of Swan Lake after replacing a more experienced dancer, Beth (Ryder). However, the lead must embody both the spirit of the White Swan, a role requiring grace and purity, but also the sensual Black Swan.

Leroy's also impressed by a new dancer, Lily (Kunis), who is waiting to take the role away from Nina. Lily encapsulates the Black Swan, while Nina seems made to be the White Swan.

The two begin a twisted friendship that increases the fractures in Nina's personality, as the lines between sanity and madness are often hard to decipher in this psychological thriller. Anybody with a pulse will be happy to know there's a pretty explicit lesbian sex scene, involving Portman and Kunis.



"This movie should be rated 'Aaarr'"

True Grit

DIRECTOR: ETHAN COEN, JOEL COEN **CAST:** JEFF BRIDGES, JOSH BROLIN, MATT DAMON, HAILEE STEINFELD **IN CINEMAS:** NOW

Jeff Bridges has enjoyed a renaissance in his career of late. After playing an unrecognisable bad guy in *Iron Man*, to resurrecting the spirit of the Dude in *Tron Legacy*, Bridges re-unites with the Coen brothers in their update of a Charles Portis novel and John Wayne classic.

Mattie Ross (Steinfeld) wants to find Tom Chaney (Brolin), the man who robbed and murdered her father. She needs help, and so hires the meanest lawman she can find, one with 'true grit'. Enter Rooster Cogburn (Bridges), a hard drinking, hard talking one-eyed cranky U.S. Marshal.

With him is Texas Ranger LaBouef (Damon) who is hunting Chaney on a completely different manner. Ross won't be deterred from finding her man, and Steinfeld's performance as the scowling girl in pigtails is a relentless force, and turns out to be the most memorable aspect of a decent, watchable flick.

Though the Coens play it safe, this is another film they should be proud of. You'll dig it.

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au.playstation.com/mubi

THE GAME IS JUST THE START...



PS3

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index

ABOUT THE INDEX

Check out our handy index of all the PS3 titles we feel you should play (and some you shouldn't). Please note: scores are a reflection of a game's comparative quality at the time of release and will not change - but the index may be updated as titles age or are superseded by new games.

ACTION

50 Cent: Blood on the Sand 7
SWORDFISH STUDIOS
So dumb it's dangerously good. Better than it sounds.

Army of Two 7
EA MONTREAL
Solid co-op thrills make up for its wasted potential.

Army of Two: The 40th Day 7
EA MONTREAL
Still bone-headed but a lot tighter and more fun than the first.

Avatar 7
UBISOFT MONTREAL
If you've got a 3D TV, buy it. If not, it's too derivative to bother.

RECOMMENDED Bayonetta 9
PLATINUM GAMES
It takes balls to make a game this violent, sexy and weird.

Bionic Commando 7
GRIN
There are some great moments, but they're few and far between.

The Bourne Conspiracy 7
HIGH MOON STUDIOS
Great presentation and vibe, samey action. Stylish, superficial.

The Club 8
BIZARRE CREATIONS
Original, compulsive and fun.

Damnation 3
BLUE OMEGA ENTERTAINMENT
Uninspired level design, broken gameplay.

Dark Sector 7
DIGITAL EXTREMES
Solid but hardly perfect.

Dark Void 6
AIRTIGHT GAMES
Unimpressive graphics, lacklustre sound and dull, dull combat.



DEAD RISING 2 9
DEVELOPER: BLUE CASTLE GAMES
PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-4
"You'll wear a stupid grin pretty much from start to finish and it's a riot in co-op. A must-play. The satisfaction of literally cutting down thousands of zombies with anything you can pick up is its only hook - but it works a treat."

Dead to Rights: Retribution 6
VOLATILE GAMES
Fine, but doesn't do enough to stand out. Needs more dog.

Devil May Cry 4 7
CAPCOM
Memorable bosses but too much backtracking spoils things.

Eat Lead: The Return of Matt Hazard 6
VICIOUS CYCLE SOFTWARE
Great concept and nice parody, but basic one-play stuff.

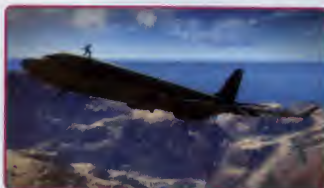
Front Mission Evolved
DOUBLE HELIX GAMES
Likable but limited mech-based combat.

Genji: Days of the Blade 5
GAME REPUBLIC
Flashy graphics, giant enemy crabs, piss-poor plodding gameplay.

RECOMMENDED Ghostbusters: The Video Game 9
TERMINAL REALITY / THREEWAVE SOFTWARE
Robust, charming and Impeccably presented.

Iron Man 3
SECRET LEVEL
Filled to the brim with bugs. Substandard.

John Woo Presents: Stranglehold 7
MIDWAY CHICAGO
Packs frantic *Max Payne*-lite fun.



JUST CAUSE 2 9
DEVELOPER: AVALANCHE STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS
PLAYERS: 1
"Parachutes. Grappling hooks. Stripper zeppelins. Why don't you already own this game? If you can dream it, you can do it in this insane action game."

Kane & Lynch: Dead Men 6
IO INTERACTIVE
A let down. Gets close to greatness before crashing back down.

Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days 7
IO INTERACTIVE
Michael Mann/YouTube visuals? Great. The game? Average.

Lost Planet: Extreme Condition 6
CAPCOM / K2 LLC
A half-arsed port you'd never bother with.

Lost Planet 2 7
CAPCOM
Slim pickings for solo players but multiplayer buffs may dig it.

Mercenaries 2: World in Flames 8
PANDEMIC STUDIOS
Weak in many areas but has fun in spades. *The Saboteur* does it better, though.

Mobile Suit Gundam: Target in Sight 3
NAMCO BANDAI
A rubber Godzilla of a title. What a pipe blocker!

Ninja Gaiden Sigma 7
TEAM NINJA
A treasure trove of gaming goodness. And violence.

RECOMMENDED Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 8
TEAM NINJA
A sexy and rock hard title but the gore's been cut.

RECOMMENDED Prototype 8
RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT
A simple superhero kill-fest but a truckload of guilty fun.

RECOMMENDED Red Faction: Guerrilla 9
VOLITION, INC.
The best destruction effects ever, hands down.

Saints Row 2 9
VOLITION, INC.
Puerile, mean-spirited and technically outclassed, if you care.

SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Confrontation 6
SLANT SIX GAMES
A sturdy effort that fails to excite.

Terminator Salvation 4
GRIN / HALCYON GAMES
An abysmal failure. Short, filled with glitches.

Time Crisis: Razing Storm 6
NAMCO
Simple, short light gun fare. Ignore the new first-person shooter mode, it's awful.

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2 8
RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT
A tense, realistic shooter. Cool gadgets.

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen 6
LUXOFLUX
A day of undemanding fun but no more.

Transformers: War for Cybertron 7
HIGH MOON
Good multiplayer, and that's about it.

RECOMMENDED Vanquish 8
PLATINUM GAMES
Whip quick third-person thrills. Play it now.

Wanted: Weapons of Fate 5
GRIN
Designed only to appeal to mentally-subnormal 11-year-olds.

RECOMMENDED Warhawk 9
INCOGNITO ENTERTAINMENT / SCE SANTA MONICA STUDIO
Furiously addictive. Tighter than a bull's arse on fight night.

WET 8
A2M
Tonnes of grindhouse style, little substance.

Wheelman 6
MIDWAY STUDIOS - NEWCASTLE / TIGON STUDIOS
Rubbish low-speed handling and underdone throughout.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine 7
RAVEN SOFTWARE
A head slicin' chest beater of a slash 'em up.

ACTION-ADVENTURE

3D Dot Game Heroes 7
FROM SOFTWARE
If you pine for the past this should keep you entertained.

Majin and the Forsaken Kingdom 7
GAME REPUBLIC
A feel-good romp that's a little old-fashioned.

RECOMMENDED Assassin's Creed 10
UBISOFT MONTREAL
A landmark, though slightly dated now.

RECOMMENDED Assassin's Creed II 9
UBISOFT MONTREAL
When everything gels correctly it casually murders its predecessor.

ESSENTIAL Assassin's Creed Brotherhood 10
UBISOFT MONTREAL
The pinnacle of the series so far, and the multiplayer is outstanding.

RECOMMENDED Batman: Arkham Asylum 8
ROCKSTEADY STUDIOS
Really delivers the goods. Best Batman game ever. Best superhero game full stop.

RECOMMENDED Brütal Legend 9
DOUBLE FINE PRODUCTIONS
Must play. If God gave rock 'n roll to us then it's settled: Tim Schafer is God.

RECOMMENDED Castlevania: Lords of Shadow 9
MERCURY STEAM
Easily one of the best games of 2010.

Clash of the Titans 4
GAME REPUBLIC
A piss-poor action game lacking in every way.

RECOMMENDED Dante's Inferno 8
VISCERAL GAMES
Derivative but well-produced and good fun.

RECOMMENDED Darksiders 8
VIGIL GAMES
It'll test your patience but persevere and your satisfaction will swell.

RECOMMENDED Dead Space 9
EA REDWOOD SHORES
Super tense. The future of survival horror.

Demon's Souls 7
FROM SOFTWARE
Those looking for an extreme challenge may have met their match.

RECOMMENDED Enslaved 8
NINJA THEORY
A fun platforming romp based on the same classic story as TV's *Monkey* was.

Fairytale Fights 7
PLAYLOGIC GAME FACTORY
Quirky and sadistic but too simplistic.

Folklore 8
GAME REPUBLIC
Original and surprising with moments of genius.

The Godfather: The Don's Edition 6
EA REDWOOD SHORES
It made for a decent PS2 game but skip this port. It's not worth it.

The Godfather II 6
EA REDWOOD SHORES
Starts as a decent crime caper but alienates fans of the film. Definitely no real reason to play this over *Mafia II*.

The Boxer



Danny Trejo, the guy who coaches you how to play *The Fight*, only started his film career in his 40s. Before that, he spent a number of years in jail for committing various crimes and was also addicted to heroin. It's possible he has more creases and crevices in his face that he's had birthdays.

Comi-c'mon!

A sequel to the competent action-adventurer *Darksiders* is scheduled for early 2012, but comic artist Joe Madureira (a.k.a. Joe Madd), the creative director, is renowned for trickling out his own comics, publishing an average of two or three a year. He clearly attended the Kazunori Yamauchi school of game design.



ESSENTIAL *God of War III*
SCE SANTA MONICA STUDIO
A showcase. Old-fashioned arse-kicking, astonishing visuals.

RECOMMENDED *God of War Collection*
SCE SANTA MONICA STUDIO / BLUEPOINT GAMES
Age has not diminished its impact. Purchase immediately.

Golden Axe: Beast Rider
SECRET LEVEL
Destined for the chopping block. No co-op? Boo!

ESSENTIAL *Grand Theft Auto IV*
ROCKSTAR NORTH
The technical scope and scale of *GTA IV* dwarfs all. Remarkable.



GRAND THEFT AUTO: EPISODES FROM LIBERTY CITY

DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR NORTH
PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR **PLAYERS:** 1-16
"Superior to *GTA IV* in many ways with two new and more interesting single-player campaigns, expanded multiplayer options and a vast array of new weapons and vehicles. Explosive shotgun? Yes please."

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince
EA BRIGHT LIGHT STUDIO
Play the first 30 minutes and you've played the whole game.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix
EA UK
The chore-like structure will bore most.

ESSENTIAL *Heavenly Sword*
NINJA THEORY
Slick graphics and refined combat. A bit short though.

Hellboy: The Science of Evil
KROME STUDIOS
Sluggish and generic. Ordinary on all counts. A shame, really.

RECOMMENDED *inFamous*
SUCKER PUNCH PRODUCTIONS
A superpowered take on the urban crime-fighting sandbox.

LEGO Batman
TRAVELLER'S TALES
Sound and faithful, but the formula is getting a bit old.

LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4
TRAVELLER'S TALES
The most thorough LEGO universe yet. More exploration than combat.

RECOMMENDED *LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures*
TRAVELLER'S TALES
Happiness and wonder overcame us with this joyous adaptation.

Lost: Via Domus
UBISOFT MONTREAL
Some solid adventuring, but the voice acting is rubbish.

RECOMMENDED *Mafia II*
2K CZECH
Its attention to detail, presentation and sound is to be admired.

ESSENTIAL *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*
KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS
Yes, it's as much a movie as it is a game, but the production values are insane. A titan amongst games. Epic.

Overlord: Raising Hell
4J STUDIOS / TRIUMPH STUDIOS
A bundle of fun, mixing tactics with a juvenile love of chaos.

Overlord II
TRIUMPH STUDIOS
Refined gameplay and more jokes but control quirks persist.

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End 6
EUROCOM
Looks the part but unfortunately it doesn't feel or play the part.

Planet 51 5
PYRO STUDIOS
Like a dry cracker for dinner. Bland and boring, and no fun.

Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands 8
UBISOFT MONTREAL
Worth your time but better swordplay could've really helped.

Prison Break 4
ZOOTFLY
A below-average stealth game cobbled together on the cheap.

RECOMMENDED *Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time*
INSOMNIAC GAMES
Reinvigorates the genre without reinventing the wheel.

RECOMMENDED *Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction* 8
INSOMNIAC GAMES
A big, wild, good ol' fashioned adventure.



RED DEAD REDEMPTION

DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO
PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR **PLAYERS:** 1-16
"A sweeping epic that's among the best games we've ever played. We're not lying when we say it's better than *GTA IV* in a lot of crucial areas."

RECOMMENDED *Resident Evil 5* 9
CAPCOM
A grand, bloody adventure but the inventory system remains bad.

RECOMMENDED *The Saboteur* 8
PANDEMIC STUDIOS
Charming and packed with action. Great, unique visual style.

SAW II: Flesh & Blood 6
ZOMBIE INC.
Lacks finesse but boasts some decent puzzles.

Silent Hill Homecoming 6
DOUBLE HELIX GAMES
New combat system is good, but lacks the cerebral chill.

The Simpsons Game 8
EA REDWOOD SHORES
Short, but the cromulent visuals embiggen the experience.

Sonic the Hedgehog 4
SONIC TEAM
There are cheaper ways to get a spare Blu-ray case.

Sonic Unleashed 6
SONIC TEAM
Hey! It's the least awful Sonic game in years!

Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions 5
BEENOX
Looks great – but why have we gone back to swinging from invisible hooks in the sky?

Spider-Man: Web of Shadows 7
TREYARCH / SHABA GAMES
Swift and tidy but not exactly deep.

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed 7
LUCASARTS
Fails to use its idea to maximum effect.

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II 6
LUCASARTS
Gets a point-and-a-bit for hour that it is long. Technically superior but still rough.

RECOMMENDED *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent* 9
UBISOFT SHANGHAI
Obsessive and gripping, online and off.

Toy Story 3 7
AVALANCHE SOFTWARE
Cute, simple, and charming as hell.

ESSENTIAL *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* 10
NAUGHTY DOG
Awesome plot, awesome graphics, awesome action. This owns.

ESSENTIAL *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves* 10
NAUGHTY DOG
This is the reason Hollywood is so worried about videogames.

Viking: Battle for Asgard 7
THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY
Slow attacks and weak visuals but it has its appeal.

Yakuza 3 7
AMUSEMENT VISION
Lots to do but the slow pace grates.

ADVENTURE

RECOMMENDED *Heavy Rain* 8
QUANTIC DREAM
Not quite a revolution but very clever and very well-crafted.

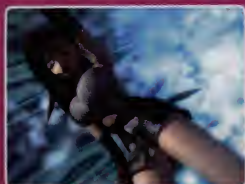
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust 1
TEAM17 SOFTWARE
An amazing new low for this generation.

FIGHTING

Battle Fantasia 7
ARCSYSTEM WORKS
A nice curiosity but, seriously, get *Super Street Fighter IV*.



THE BEST PSone CLASSICS ON PlayStation®Store



FINAL FANTASY VII
DEVELOPER: SQUARE
PLAYERS: 1
The RPG upon which all other RPGs are generally judged, *Final Fantasy VII* is a modern classic and a worthy part of every credible videogame library.



DRIVER
DEVELOPER: REFLECTIONS
INTERACTIVE PLAYERS: 1
The original *Driver* hit PlayStation like a blast of fresh air. Hectic car chases through 3D cities may old-hat now but when *Driver* debuted it was like nothing we'd seen.



CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED
DEVELOPER: NAUGHTY DOG
PLAYERS: 1
The best platformer on any PlayStation. As far as old-school run and jump action in purpose-built levels goes, this is the zenith.



SYPHON FILTER
DEVELOPER: EIDETIC
PLAYERS: 1
If you still think *Syphon Filter* was a MGS rip-off you're misled. Play it again and tell us this awesome series doesn't deserve a PS3 comeback.



MEDIEVIL
DEVELOPER: SCE STUDIO
CAMBRIDGE PLAYERS: 1
Speaking of games that deserve a PS3 comeback, where's *Sir Dan*? Fantasy hack 'n slash meets the supernatural, *Medievil* still does it better than most since.



inhouse

FEATURED STUDIO OF THE MONTH

Ubisoft Montreal

LOCATION: QUEBEC FOUNDED: 1997 BEST KNOWN FOR: TOM CLANCY'S EVERYTHING

Deciding to make the leap across the North Atlantic in the late '90s, the France-based Ubisoft opened a new studio in Montreal, Canada. We suspect there are two reasons for this: firstly, Ubisoft could install staff members from its French HQ, since Montreal is a French-speaking region in Canada. Secondly, the Canadian government is pretty supportive when it comes to awarding grants for videogame developers.

Indeed, the Canadian government wisely saw the scope for Ubisoft's local success – their investment in assisting their set-up reaped its reward when the Montreal branch became Ubisoft's biggest studio, and the second largest development studio in the world with more than 1,600 employees working on a multitude of genres and licenses.

Despite the French connection, Ubisoft Montreal is enmeshed with the English-speaking world around it, especially in Quebec that is close to the rest of North America, and the city itself has a European quality to it. The studio also liaises with local universities to teach students various streams of videogame design, including animation, level design and modelling as part of 'Campus Ubisoft'.

Speaking to Gamasutra in 2006, Yannis Mallat, CEO of Ubisoft Montreal,

said "the people in Québec are close to the North American market.... They watch the same programs, they have the same entertainment, so they know what works." It's a critical step to financial success. Make games that sell well in the American market and your title earns blockbuster status, so it's a smart move to place yourself in a location that allows for this.

One of the studio's biggest coups was their acquisition of Tom Clancy's name on videogames and has struck massive commercial success. *Rainbow Six* has sold 23 million units world wide. *Splinter Cell* 22 million. *Ghost Recon* 18 million. These are huge numbers.

In 2007, the studio released the first part of a hugely popular series, *Assassin's Creed*. A bold step at the time, but Altair's adventures stemmed from its work on another clever climber, *Prince of Persia*.

It's not just involved in game production; in 2007 Ubisoft Montreal began to oversee Ubisoft Digital Arts, a studio dedicated to producing short films and other media based on games from the Ubisoft stable. Then, in 2008, the company also acquired Hybride Technologies. Their first project was a series of short films based on *Assassin's Creed II*.

RECOMMENDED BlazBlue: Continuum Shift
ARC SYSTEM WORKS
Still wilder, wackier and noisier than anything else on PS3.

Def Jam: Icon
EA CHICAGO
Pretty and highly kinetic. A bit cumbersome.

FaceBreaker
EA CANADA
Great look but very unbalanced.

The Fight: Lights Out
COLDWOOD INTERACTIVE
The Move controls don't feel as organic as we'd hoped they would. Sorry Danny Trejo.

The King of Fighters XII
SNK PLAYMORE
Grey, old and well beyond retirement. Irredeemable.

Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe
MIDWAY GAMES
A fun game with mass appeal but not very technical.

RECOMMENDED Soulcalibur IV
NAMCO BANDAI
Phenomenal, but will let down those expecting a revolution.

RECOMMENDED Street Fighter IV
CAPCOM / DIMPS
A tight-fisted gut blow of wow, but you'd grab *Super Street Fighter IV* instead now.



SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM/DIMPS
PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-2
"With the 'vanilla' versions vibrant look, online mode and pristine gameplay – but with a stack of new characters, all unlocked and at a bargain price – *Super Street Fighter IV* belongs in everyone's collection."

RECOMMENDED Tekken 6
NAMCO BANDAI
Easy to play, with the biggest roster ever. Feels a bit old, though.

TNA Impact!
MIDWAY STUDIOS - LOS ANGELES
Good, arcade-style biff but there's not enough content.

Virtua Fighter 5
SEGA-AM2
As hardcore as fighting games get.

WWE Legends of WrestleMania
YUKE'S
Gets by on retro charm but feels absolutely ancient.

WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010
YUKE'S
If the soap-drama of the WWE's your thing, welcome to nirvana.

FLYING

Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII
UBISOFT ROMANIA
A simple aerial blaster. Flawed but fun.

Blazing Angels 2: Secret Missions of WWII
UBISOFT ROMANIA
Solid, varied, but not quite the ace of aces.

Heroes Over Europe
TRANSMISSION GAMES
A little rough but not bad. *IL-2* is much better though.



IL-2 STURMOVIK: BIRDS OF PREY
DEVELOPER: GAIJIN ENTERTAINMENT
PUBLISHER: AFA PLAYERS: 1-16
"Head turning visuals, astonishing attention to detail, brilliant sound effects and stacks of ratta-tat action all combine in this truly surprisingly awesome aerial combat game. To be honest it's the best flight game we've ever played."

Lair
FACTOR 5
It feels rushed and unfinished. Deeply disappointing.

Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.
UBISOFT ROMANIA
Tight and accessible but a bit sterile.

RECOMMENDED Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2
UBISOFT ROMANIA
A top gun successor. More detail, better mission design.

MUSIC

AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack
HARMONIX
Bare-bones stuff but the music is worth it. Fully exportable.

THE BEST PSP GAMES



GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES
DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR LEEDS
PLAYERS: 1-6

This is about as remarkable as gaming gets on a handheld console. A fully-fledged 3D GTA, just like the PS2 versions, on PSP – and it feels absolutely brilliant. Also? Phil Collins is in it. No, we're totally serious.



MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM UNITE
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PLAYERS: 1-4

Monster Hunter is a true system seller in its native Japan and it deserves that sort of awareness here. It's an adventure game to lose your life to and will reward you in spades if you're able to put the effort in.



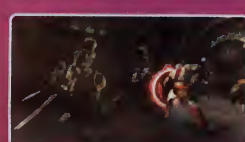
WIPEOUT PULSE
DEVELOPER: SCE LIVERPOOL
PLAYERS: 1-8

Beautiful and weighted just right, it's a futurist's wet dream. There's a reason *Wipeout* just works – and this is proof. Depending on which day of the week you ask us this just pips the likes of *Burnout Legends* and *Gran Turismo* for best racing game on PSP.



METAL GEAR SOLID: PEACE WALKER
DEVELOPER: KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS
PLAYERS: 1-6

A proper, well-produced and thought-out *Metal Gear*; this is a must-have. The story's great and the action is totally addictive. We can't stress it enough: buy this game, and a PSP if you must. This is a title that no gamer should miss.



GOD OF WAR: GHOST OF SPARTA
DEVELOPER: READY AT DAWN
PLAYERS: 1

Stupidly better than the already excellent *Chains of Olympus*, this still has fantastic graphics and tighter-than-hades gameplay. If you're a fan of the series, this is a crucial part of the saga you really shouldn't miss.

Band Hero
NEVERSOFT
Robust but the over-zealous censorship grates a lot.

RECOMMENDED The Beatles: Rock Band
HARMONIX
Outstanding. This is a tribute like no other.

RECOMMENDED DJ Hero
FREESTYLEGAMES
Tough to write off as a gimmick.

RECOMMENDED DJ Hero 2
FREESTYLEGAMES
Some great improvements and some excellent, unique mixes.

RECOMMENDED Green Day: Rock Band
HARMONIX
Very good. Up there with *The Beatles: Rock Band* and *Guitar Hero: Metallica*.

Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock
NEVERSOFT
The last *GH* with a mostly decent soundtrack.

Guitar Hero World Tour
NEVERSOFT
Good, but missing crucial elements that make *Rock Band* better.

Guitar Hero 5
NEVERSOFT
Improving, but the hipster tracklist is a dud.

RECOMMENDED Guitar Hero: Metallica
NEVERSOFT
The best in the series since *Guitar Hero III*.

Guitar Hero: Greatest Hits
BEENOX
Great past *GH* tracks with full band support. Seriously though, why wasn't it just DLC?

Guitar Hero: Van Halen
UNDERGROUND DEVELOPMENT
Only buy this cheap: \$90 is an insult. USA *GH5* buyers got it as a free bonus.

Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock
NEVERSOFT
Functional, but it just isn't evolving at the same rate as its peers.

LEGO Rock Band
HARMONIX / TRAVELLER'S TALES
Cute. Fewer tracks than we'd like though.

RECOMMENDED Rock Band
HARMONIX
The best party game ever, until the sequels.

ESSENTIAL Rock Band 2
HARMONIX
The best music game series around.

RECOMMENDED Rock Band 3
HARMONIX
Improvements to the interface abound, but it's only as good as your existing DLC library.

SingStar
SCE LONDON STUDIO
Will last as long as the PS3 with so much DLC.

PARTY

EyePet
SCE LONDON STUDIO
Harmless fun but pointless for adults.

Hail to the Chim
WIDELOAD GAMES
Want to lose friends? Play this with them.

Kung Fu Rider
JAPAN STUDIO
Waggle-based bullshit. A terrible example of a Move game.

Scene It? Bright Lights! Big Screen!
A2M
Vanilla compared to the past Xbox versions.

The Shoot
COHORT STUDIOS
A good Move rail shooter. Cool presentation.

RECOMMENDED Sports Champions
ZINDAGI GAMES
Despite a few quirks this is the must-have Move title.

Start the Party!
SUPERMASSIVE GAMES
Great to keep the rugrats amused for a while.

PUZZLE/PLATFORMER

RECOMMENDED Katamari Forever
NAMCO BANDAI
Joyfulness, digitally realised. Infectious.

ESSENTIAL LittleBigPlanet
MEDIA MOLECULE
Innovative and never-ending. It's time to hit the sack!

RECOMMENDED The Sly Collection
SUCKER PUNCH
A surprisingly fun and fresh bunch of gems.

RACING

Blur
BIZARRE CREATIONS
A race to power-ups rather than a racer with power-ups.

RECOMMENDED Burnout Paradise
CRITERION GAMES
Stunning and sharp but we miss the dedicated *Crash Mode*.

RECOMMENDED Colin McRae: DiRT
CODEMASTERS
Plenty of real rally action, unlike its sequel.

Colin McRae: DiRT 2
CODEMASTERS
Flashy and drives fine but it's style over substance here.

Ferrari Challenge
EUTECHNYX
Serious and robust but it won't trouble *Gran Turismo 5*.



GRAN TURISMO 5
DEVELOPER: POLYPHONY DIGITAL
PUBLISHER: SCE PLAYERS: 1-16
"GT5 feels familiar, and is still an RPG masquerading as a racing game. It looks stunning with class-leading lighting effects and exceptionally modelled premium cars, and with a G27 wheel it feels incredible. We just wish that there were some more recent cars."

Fuel
ASOBO STUDIOS
Huge, but bugged, boring and undercooked.

Full Auto 2: Battlelines
PSEUDO INTERACTIVE
Fun but shallow. You'd take *Split/Second* instead these days.

RECOMMENDED F1 2010
CODEMASTERS
A white-knuckle racer and an authentic title.

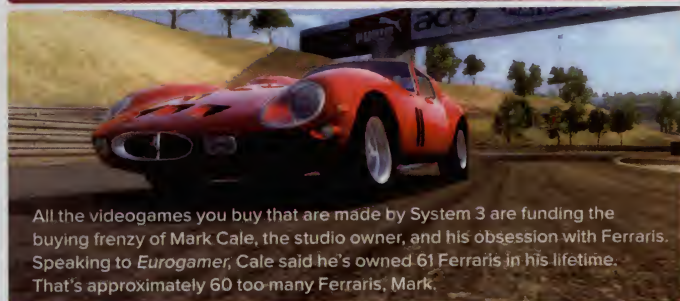
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights
JUICE GAMES
Stout mechanics, glossy options. Not too deep though.

Midnight Club: Los Angeles
ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO
Visually sleek at times. Great customisation and seamless racing.

RECOMMENDED ModNation Racers
UNITED FRONT GAMES
An incredible package. Creating is even more fun than racing.

MotoGP 09/10
MONUMENTAL GAMES
Simulation freaks will want to veer well away.

You'll need a big garage



All the videogames you buy that are made by System 3 are funding the buying frenzy of Mark Cale, the studio owner, and his obsession with Ferraris. Speaking to *Eurogamer*, Cale said he's owned 61 Ferraris in his lifetime. That's approximately 60 too many Ferraris, Mark.

RECOMMENDED MotorStorm
EVOLUTION STUDIOS
Fast, hard and dirty. In 2007 it was everything a racing game should be. Things have come on a bit since then though.

MotorStorm: Pacific Rift
EVOLUTION STUDIOS
Boasts split-screen but visually it hasn't come on far enough.

MX vs. ATV: Untamed
RAINBOW STUDIOS
Feels like a PS2 port with no next gen goodness.

MX vs. ATV Reflex
RAINBOW STUDIOS
Motocross freaks will love it. Needed a little more zest though.

RECOMMENDED Need for Speed Hot Pursuit
CRITERION
Smooth, compelling and absolutely beautiful arcade racing.

RECOMMENDED Need for Speed: SHIFT
SLIGHTLY MAD STUDIOS
Superbly presented and a blast to play. Feels fast.

Need for Speed: Undercover
EA BLACK BOX
Technically faulty, and adds nothing good since *Most Wanted*.

RECOMMENDED Pure
BLACK ROCK STUDIOS
Still one of the best arcade racers on the market.

RECOMMENDED Race Driver: GR1
CODEMASTERS
A born-to-rage racing rebel. Good, but lacks the *Race Driver* vintage, despite the name.

SBK-X: Superbike World Championship
MILESTONE
Inches in front of *MotoGP 09/10*. Purists may still hate on it.

Sega Rally
SEGA RACING STUDIO
Familiar, old-school arcade fun.

Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing
SUMO DIGITAL
Fun but shallow. Copies from the best but missing a crucial spark.

RECOMMENDED Split/Second
BLACK ROCK STUDIO
Doesn't feel as sharp as *Burnout* but it's a true challenger.

Stuntman: Ignition
PARADIGM ENTERTAINMENT
The vehicular equivalent of a 10-hour long orgasm.

SuperCar Challenge
EUTECHNYX
Admirable effort but feels a little bland despite the exotic cars.

Superstars V8: Next Challenge
MILESTONE
An improvement but it's still more shallow than it thinks it is.

RECOMMENDED WRC
MILESTONE
Drab graphics, imperfect sound, but a joyfully robust driving model.

RPG/ACTION RPG

Alpha Protocol
OBSIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT
Great concept, poor execution. Also? Worst male lead ever.

Cross Edge
COMPILE HEART
Every benchmark of excellence has been missed. Offensive.

RECOMMENDED Dragon Age: Origins
BIOWARE
As long as it is enthralling. Essential for patient fantasy freaks.

ESSENTIAL The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion
BETHESDA GAME STUDIOS
Simply put: awesome.



FALLOUT 3
DEVELOPER: BETHESDA PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS PLAYERS: 1
"Taking the solid base of *Oblivion* and placing it into a post-apocalyptic wasteland always sounded like a great idea and *Fallout 3* proves that concept brilliantly."

RECOMMENDED Fallout: New Vegas
OBSIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT
A great ride but you've been on it before.

RECOMMENDED Final Fantasy XIII
SQUARE ENIX
Spellbinding graphics and 50+ hours of action.

Marvel: Ultimate Alliance
RAVEN SOFTWARE
Colourful, action-packed, co-op dungeon crawling.

Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2
VICARIOUS VISIONS
A compelling romp but the button-mashing play needs updating.

Nier
CAVIA UNRELEASED
Decent enough, but there are richer experiences elsewhere.

Resonance of Fate
TRI-ACE
Deep, but also wordy, clunky and ugly.

Sacred 2: Fallen Angel
ASCARON ENTERTAINMENT
Gigantic, but feels very slapped together.

Valkyria Chronicles
SEGA WOW
Strategy and RPG heads alike should not miss this game.

White Knight Chronicles
LEVEL-5 / SCE JAPAN STUDIO
Not a great way to spend 30-or-so hours.

SHOOTER

RECOMMENDED Aliens vs. Predator 9
REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS
One of the best movie-inspired titles ever. Beyond brutal.

RECOMMENDED Battlefield: Bad Company 8
DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE
Destructible environments and humour. Together at last.

RECOMMENDED Battlefield: Bad Company 2 8
DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE
A top-tier shooter but the single-player mischief is M.I.A.

RECOMMENDED BioShock 8
IRRATIONAL GAMES / 2K MARIN
14 months too late, but this is grown-up gaming at its best.

RECOMMENDED BioShock 2 9
2K MARIN / DIGITAL EXTREMES / 2K AUSTRALIA
Doesn't match the original's plot.

BlackSite: Area 51 5
MIDWAY STUDIOS AUSTIN
A pedestrian shooter that needed more time in the lab.



BORDERLANDS 9
DEVELOPER: GEARBOX SOFTWARE
PUBLISHER: 2K PLAYERS: 1-4
"Borderlands starts out great and only gets better. It takes the best elements from RPGs and fuses them to a superb shooter. The result is quite simply the most rewarding co-op to date. The fact it's being supported by so much extra DLC, even this long after release, means it's great value for money too."

RECOMMENDED Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway 8
GEARBOX SOFTWARE
The most authentic WWII shooter ever made.

Call of Duty 3 7
TREYARCH
Solid but surprisingly unspectacular.

ESSENTIAL Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare 10
INFINITY WARD
Relentlessly exciting. You'd have to be mental to miss this.



MODERN WARFARE 2 10
DEVELOPER: INFINITY WARD
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION PLAYERS: 1-18
"It's almost like three games in one, stuffed with moments that will leave you shocked and breathless with excitement. Supremely crafted, *Modern Warfare 2* is, with its older brother, a high-watermark for this generation of shooters."

RECOMMENDED Call of Duty: Black Ops 9
TREYARCH
A generous package with great solo and online play. The presentation's excellent too.

ESSENTIAL Call of Duty: World at War 10
TREYARCH
A class act. War at its worst (and best). Proof you can make a great WWII game set (partially) in the Pacific. Plus, Nazi Zombies.

Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood 7
TECHLAND
A cinematic and action-packed Western shooter.

RECOMMENDED The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena 8
STARBREEZE STUDIOS / TIGON STUDIOS
Moody and fresh. A must play. You don't need to know the movies to enjoy it either.

Condemned 2: Bloodshot 9
MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS
Gripping stuff. We were blown away. Shame the original isn't on PS3.

RECOMMENDED The Darkness 9
STARBREEZE STUDIOS
Stunning, original and gory as hell. Cross your fingers for a sequel because this rocks.

F.E.A.R.
MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS / DAY1 STUDIOS
A chilling ride, but the graphics could've been sharper.

F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin
MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS
An above-average shooter suffering from a lack of imagination.

RECOMMENDED Far Cry 2 8
UBISOFT MONTREAL
A technical open-world bell-ringer but the travel time will grate.

Haze 6
FREE RADICAL DESIGN
Patchy visuals, tragic level design and dismal AI.

ESSENTIAL Killzone 2 10
GUERRILLA GAMES
Lives up to the hype. Amazing graphics, hectic action.

Legendary
SPARK UNLIMITED
A rushed mess. Terrible.

RECOMMENDED MAG 9
ZIPPERINTERACTIVE
Shooter junkies take heed: this is where it's at for online combat.

RECOMMENDED Medal of Honor 8
DANGER CLOSE / DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE
Not sexy but it's a gritty, realistic shooter with great atmosphere.

Medal of Honor: Airborne 6
EA LOS ANGELES
Short and lacks innovation. Too many problems.

RECOMMENDED Mirror's Edge 8
EA DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE
A true original that makes some grand leaps in design.

Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising 8
CODEMASTERS
Authentic but niche. Very unforgiving.

RECOMMENDED The Orange Box 9
EA UK / VALVE CORPORATION
Portal is worth virtually any asking price alone. The rest of what's here, including the critically-acclaimed *Half-Life 2*, is a bonus.

Quantum of Solace 7
TREYARCH
Has too many faults to be compelling.

RECOMMENDED Resistance: Fall of Man 10
INSOMNIAC GAMES
A fantastic launch title with sweet weapons.

RECOMMENDED Resistance 2 9
INSOMNIAC GAMES
Fast, furious and stuffed with action.

Rogue Warrior 3
ZOMBIE STUDIOS / REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS
A fiasco. We tried to like it but it's too short and too terrible.

Singularity 7
RAVEN SOFTWARE
Had potential but wasn't quite worth the wait.

Time Crisis 4 7
NEX ENTERTAINMENT
A little bipolar at times. Arcade mode's okay.

TimeShift 6
SABER INTERACTIVE
A solid attempt that doesn't quite reach 88 miles per hour.

RECOMMENDED Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas 9
UBISOFT MONTREAL
Slick, good-looking and utterly engaging.

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas 2 7
UBISOFT MONTREAL
Doesn't quite feel as good or as cool as the first one.

Turning Point: Fall of Liberty 4
SPARK UNLIMITED
Scrappy throughout. Great concept, bogus execution.

Turok 7
PROPAGANDA GAMES
Packs bite but it's missing a few teeth.

Unreal Tournament 3 8
EPIC GAMES
Fast, twitchy online multiplayer shooting. No splitscreen though.

Wolfenstein 7
RAVEN SOFTWARE / ID SOFTWARE
Lacks soul but delivers Nazi-blasting action.

Monkey business



If you're ever looking for an example of playing to your strengths, look to Crytek UK. Previously known as Free Radical Design many of the design staff also worked at Rare on the legendary *GoldenEye*. Aside from *Second Sight* Free Radical's back-catalogue consists only of first-person shooters

SPORTS

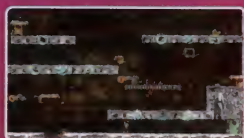
2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa 7
EA CANADA
Blissful, *FIFA 10* football with a World Cup facelift. A bit pricey.

Ashes Cricket 2009 6
TRANSMISSION GAMES
Disappointing, but stick through the ugly for some multiplayer beauty.

Backbreaker 7
NATURALMOTION
Great tech. Worth a look to see euphoria at work in a sports game.



THE BEST PSN GAMES ON PlayStation®Store



BRAID
DEVELOPER: HOTHREAD
PLAYERS: 1
A charming platformer that incorporates one of last decade's most used mechanics – time manipulation – whilst wrapped up in gorgeous graphics. Incredibly addictive and charming, it's made even better when you discover it was all made by one man.



PIXELJUNK SHOOTER
DEVELOPER: Q-GAMES
PLAYERS: 1-2
Take control of a tiny ship and navigate your way through various caverns, rescuing any survivors along the way. Of course, there's interesting gameplay mechanics thrown into the mix, such as fluid water and lava dynamics that need to be used to solve puzzles.



FLIGHT CONTROL HD
DEVELOPER: FIREMINT
PLAYERS: 1-4
Possibly the most addictive and accessible PSN title available. The premise is simply to guide the aircraft on-screen to their respective runways. That's it – but you'll be totally hooked. One of the best games to play with PlayStation Move too.



PAC-MAN CE DX
DEVELOPER: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS
PLAYERS: 1
More than an update, this is a revolution. The 'CE' stands for 'Championship Edition', and is a mash of different maps and modes revolving around guiding Paccers through the dots and wailing ghosts. This is begging to be your new addiction.



MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PLAYERS: 1-2
It's by no means 'straight' *Street Fighter* though nor should it be. Stuffed with 56 characters this three-on-three brawler is a visual and aural explosion. The HD treatment is superbly done. If you're a fighting nut you should have this already.

Just bail, Birdman

Tony Hawk Shred, the sequel to the pretty abysmal *RIDE*, sold a measly 3000 copies in first week in the whole of the US. The developer Robomodo sacked 60 of its employees in September last year, and has confirmed that it will no longer be working in the franchise. Ouch.

Beijing 2008 5
EUROCOM
Not the worst of its type but far from a game to buy and keep.

EA Sports MMA 7
EA SPORTS
Great controls but struggles to be convincing.



FIFA 11 9
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-22
"While the hundreds of matches ahead may eventually bring this titan back to Earth with another wish-list of changes for *FIFA 12*, at the moment *FIFA 11* remains a bafflingly brilliant update. If you've skipped the last few *FIFA* updates boost the score by one. Seriously, it's that good. Essential."

RECOMMENDED Fight Night Round 4 9
EACANADA
Runs like a dream. Technical and strategic, plus it looks absolutely brilliant.

International Cricket 2010 7
TRICKSTAR GAMES
Not the most comprehensive cricket game but certainly the best when you're on the pitch.

John Daly's ProStroke Golf 5
GUSTO GAMES
Those looking for a high production value golf game should give this the shaft.

RECOMMENDED NBA 2K11 8
VISUAL CONCEPTS / KUSH GAMES
Hard court high priest Michael Jordan stars in perhaps the best basketball game ever.

NBA Jam 8
EACANADA
A faithful and fun update to the '90s classic.

Pro Evolution Soccer 2011 8
KONAMI
Good for a goal fix, still second best overall. Get *FIFA 11*.

Rugby League Live 5
BIG ANT
Not as complete a game as the last one on PS2 and the whack team ratings frustrate.

Shaun White Skateboarding 6
UBISOFT MONTREAL
Kudos for the quirky touches but the skating itself is pretty bland.

Shaun White Snowboarding 6
UBISOFT MONTREAL
Lacks the fine touch of realism or the excitement of lunacy.

RECOMMENDED Skate 9
EA BLACK BOX
A well-balanced masterpiece and true *Tony Hawk* killer. Trumped by its sequels.



SKATE 2 9
DEVELOPER: BLACK BOX
PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-8
"Skate 2 is one of the greatest sports games ever conceived. The controls are flawless, the city is dense and packed with natural lines and the balance is sublime."

RECOMMENDED Skate 3 8
EA BLACK BOX
Better in many ways, although the city isn't as cool as *Skate 2*.

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09 8
EA TIBURON
Still the only golf game worth owning.

Tony Hawk's Project 8 7
NEVERSOFT
No real reason to revisit this post-Skate at all.

Tony Hawk's Proving Ground 6
NEVERSOFT
Bloated and inconsistent. Pass.

Tony Hawk: RIDE 4
ROBOMODO
Pure frustration made plastic.

Top Spin 3 8
PAM DEVELOPMENT
Realistic tennis with a steep learning curve. Rewarding, but needs time to master.

RECOMMENDED UFC Undisputed 2010 8
YUKE'S
The new undisputed baron of sports fighting.

Vancouver 2010 6
EUROCOM
A handful of events that last one afternoon.

RECOMMENDED Virtua Tennis 2009 8
SUMO DIGITAL
The top seed of tennis made even better. Great four player fun.

STRATEGY

RECOMMENDED Civilization Revolution 8
FIRAXIS GAMES
Great fun and shockingly addictive.

RECOMMENDED R.U.S.E. 8
EUGEN SYSTEMS
Niche but supremely well-crafted strategy. Better with Move, too.

The Sims 3 7
THE SIMS STUDIO
Waiting to pounce on the right type of gamer.

Stormrise 4
THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY
A cack-handed, future war mess.

Tom Clancy's EndWar 7
UBISOFT SHANGHAI
Far from a finished product. Works, but it's hardly an essential purchase.

infamous

REVISITING PLAYSTATION CLASSICS

2003:
WHIPLASH

CONSOLE: PS2 GENRE: PLATFORMER DEVELOPER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: UNITED STATES CURRENT APPROXIMATE PRICE: \$20



What an excellent concept. Two animals, Spanx the weasel and Redmond the rabbit, are chained together in a laboratory and are about to be fed through a machine to make them into one hybrid beast. Rather than suffer a life of having beauty products rubbed into their gums they escape, and you take control of Spanx with the hapless Redmond in tow.

Bunny's the slapstick sidekick in this platformer. Since they're literally chained together, Spanx uses Redmond as a wrecking ball, a zip-line handle, and also as a helicopter to glide down from high places. There are times when he's also set on fire. The cranky-looking fluff ball is, therefore, invincible, since he's a combination of many tools that Spanx would either have to pick up or carry in a pouch, or very deep videogame pockets.

This would negate much of the satire. We've never really heard of weasels being used in animal testing, but their genetically similar cousin the mink has a reputation for being skinned and used for posh people's clothing, while rabbits have a place next to mice in various cosmetics labs across the world. However, weasels are regarded as pretty clever and cunning creatures so we guess it fits.

Whiplash kept players involved by

being funny. Visual gags were a staple, such as amusing signs in the company's labs, fake products and the relentless slapstick tied into one-liners drew guffaws from undemanding audiences. In 2011, though, it feels very tired.

Artistically, *Whiplash* was just too dark, visually rather than thematically, and the production had a few highlights but too many moments that should've been better – the human's lines were often repeated. It was far too short and easy, powerups close by and punishment for failure was remarkably lax as you trotted down a few too many laser-guarded hallways. Also, there were repetitive enemies to thrash and lots of mindless destruction. Still, we like the meter that keeps a tally of how much damage you're causing the company.

It's no *Jak & Daxter*, *Ape Escape*, *Ratchet & Clank*, all of which were better platformers. Plus, all the previously mentioned games had sequels. *Whiplash's* lack of solid gameplay in a glut of excellent titles meant it missed out.



CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

If there's one thing we miss about the early part of this millennium it's a studio's willingness to try something new. Though *Whiplash* wasn't great, the surface concept of two animals escaping a laboratory was fresh. However, if a game doesn't sell (and *Whiplash* wasn't a critical success, either) then you're not likely to make a sequel or stay in the black for long. Thus, Crystal Dynamics picked up the rights to make *Tomb Raider* games, and made a killing with the best selling *Lara Croft* game, *Tomb Raider: Legend* in 2006 after its decent shooter, *Project: Snowblind* (destined for the same fate as *Whiplash*). Their fifth *Tomb Raider* game and a re-imagining of the series, just called *Tomb Raider*, is out this year.

Next month

Duke Nukem Forever

We head to Sin City for an
exclusive date with the Duke!



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